



HARPURSVILLE

CENTRAL SCHOOL

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Your child has been exposed to head lice recently. Below is some information about checking your child for head lice, as well as treatment information if your child does have head lice. According to the CDC website, some experts believe prophylactic treatment is prudent for persons who share the same bed with actively infested individuals. All infested persons (household members and close contacts) and their bedmates should be treated at the same time.

What to look for:

- Small silvery nits fixed to the hair shaft, similar in appearance to dandruff, but not easily removed.
- Where nits have hatched, live lice may be seen.
- Lice stay near the scalp, often behind the ears, near the neckline, and back of the head.
- Head lice hold tightly to the hair. They move by crawling. They cannot hop or fly (they do not have wings) but do move quickly making it difficult to find in a child's hair.
- Signs of head lice infestation include itchy scalp, tickling sensation in a person's hair, sores on the head caused by scratching.

If your child is found to have head lice, it is important to treat your child as soon as possible, preferably before he/she returns to school. Your prompt action is requested so that your child is more comfortable and will not spread it to others.

Tips for prescription or over-the-counter head lice treatment:

- Whether using an over-the-counter head lice product or a prescribed treatment, it is very important that you read and follow all directions on the product's label.
- Do not use a combination shampoo/conditioner, or conditioner before using lice medicine. Do not re-wash the hair for 1-2 days after the lice medicine is removed.
- It is recommended that both the person getting treated and the person administering the treatment put on clean clothing after the treatment is completed.
- Be cautious not to use more than one head lice medication at a time.
- If a few live lice are still found 8–12 hours after treatment, but are moving more slowly than before, do not retreat. The medicine may take longer to kill all the lice. Comb dead and any remaining live lice out of the hair using a fine-toothed nit comb.
- If, after 8–12 hours of treatment, no dead lice are found and lice seem as active as before, the medicine may not be working. Do not retreat until speaking with your health care provider; a different pediculicide may be necessary. If your health care provider recommends a different pediculicide, carefully follow the treatment instructions contained in the box or printed on the label.
- Nit (head lice egg) combs, often found in lice medicine packages, should be used to comb nits and lice from the hair shaft. Many flea combs made for cats and dogs are also effective.
- After each treatment, checking the hair and combing with a nit comb to remove nits and lice every 2–3 days may decrease the chance of self-reinfestation. Continue to check for 2–3 weeks to be sure all lice and nits are gone. Nit removal is not needed when treating with Spinosad topical suspension.



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- Retreatment is meant to kill any surviving hatched lice before they produce new eggs. For some drugs, retreatment is recommended routinely about a week after the first treatment (7–9 days, depending on the drug) and for others only if crawling lice are seen during this period. Retreatment with lindane shampoo is not recommended.

Tips for combing out head lice and nits:

- Use a fine-toothed louse or nit comb. These combs may be included within packages of medicated head lice treatment, or you may buy one from most drug stores. Combs with metal teeth spaced close together seem to work best.
- Sit behind your child and use a bright light (and magnification if needed), to inspect and comb through the hair, one section at a time.
- Repeat combing until no more active lice are observed.
- Come daily until no live lice are discovered for two weeks. It may take several hours each night for several nights to tackle the problem. An entertaining video may help keep your child occupied during this time.
- Adult female lice cement eggs to the base of a hair shaft near the skin. As the hair grows, eggs are moved away from the scalp. Eggs more than ¼ inch from the scalp are nearly always hatched and do not mean live lice are present.
- Combs, brushes, hats, and other hair accessories in contact with an infested person should be washed in hot water each day to dislodge any lice or nits.
- Combing is sometimes painful to the child, or it may be impractical for other reasons. In these cases, consider using anti-lice products.

Supplemental Measures

Head lice do not survive long if they fall off a person and cannot feed. You don't need to spend a lot of time or money on housecleaning activities. Follow these steps to help avoid re-infestation by lice that have recently fallen off the hair or crawled onto clothing or furniture.

- Machine wash and dry clothing, bed linens, and other items that the infested person wore or used during the 2 days before treatment using the hot water (130°F) laundry cycle and the high heat drying cycle. Clothing and items that are not washable can be dry-cleaned **OR** sealed in a plastic bag and stored for 2 weeks.
- Soak combs and brushes in hot water (at least 130°F) for 5–10 minutes.
- Vacuum the floor and furniture, particularly where the infested person sat or lay. However, the risk of getting infested by a louse that has fallen onto a rug or carpet or furniture is very small. Head lice survive less than 1–2 days if they fall off a person and cannot feed; nits cannot hatch and usually die within a week if they are not kept at the same temperature as that found close to the human scalp. Spending much time and money on housecleaning activities is not necessary to avoid reinfestation by lice or nits that may have fallen off the head or crawled onto furniture or clothing.
- Do not use fumigant sprays; they can be toxic if inhaled or absorbed through the skin.