

# What to do if your child comes home with head lice:

Don't panic. Anyone—adult or youngster—can get head lice. Head lice are passed from person to person by direct contact or on shared objects (combs, towels, headphones, etc.). *It has nothing to do with cleanliness and does not reflect poorly on you as a parent.* The problem is easily managed. Just follow the instructions below:

## 1. Check every member of the family.

Look for tiny white eggs (nits) on hair shafts, near the scalp, especially at the nape of the neck and behind the ears. Head lice are small grayish-tan insects without wings. Any family member with lice or nits must be treated.



## 2. Use an effective head lice treatment.

Several are available without a prescription. Follow the package directions exactly. Your child may require a 2<sup>nd</sup> treatment 7 days after the initial treatment if live lice/nits are found. A 2<sup>nd</sup> treatment is required for some products, regardless of nits.



## 3. Remove all nits.

Gently comb the child's hair with the special nit removal comb. No treatment is 100% effective in killing nits. Failure to remove all nits may result in chronic head lice infestation. Special nit removal combs can be helpful. Use them to remove nits, one small section at a time. After each section is completed and checked, pin back. After all areas are completed and rechecked, rinse thoroughly. Check & remove nits daily for 2 weeks. The comb may not remove all nits. Nits may have to be removed by hand.



## 4. Wash clothes, bed linens, and towels.

Clothing, linen and cloth toys worn or handled by the infested individual during the 2 days before diagnosis should be washed in water hotter than 130 degrees F and/or machine dried at the hottest setting for at least 20 minutes. Other items may be sealed in a plastic bag for at least two weeks. Remember to wash/dry clean jackets, hats, backpacks, and hair accessories.



## 5. Soak combs, brushes, etc. in hot water.

Combs and brushes used on infested persons should be immersed in water hotter than 130 degrees F.



## 6. Vacuum everywhere.

Floors, rugs, pillows, upholstered furniture, car seats, and car upholstery should be vacuumed.



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*Head lice cannot survive without a human host. They cannot survive on family pets. Choose an effective treatment, use as directed, and perform the steps listed above to help eliminate head lice from your home and to help prevent their spread in the community. Please remember to notify the school nurse, as well as any of your child's recent contacts.*