

Lice Tips – Parental Suggestions for Treatment

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Dear Parents,

If you have not yet experienced the ordeal of dealing with lice, I'm hoping to save you a little time and trouble in the future.

Here are a few tips:

- 1) Go online to sites that show photos of lice (lice identification) so that you know what to look for. Some children have flaky, white, dry skin on their scalps - these flakes are not to be confused with lice. When identifying lice, you may find live bugs, clear or white eggs close to the scalp, or nits, about the size of a tiny grain of rice, often amber colored. The nits do not fall out easily. You must pull them out by sliding them down the hair shaft with your fingers or with a fine-tooth comb. It is far easier to check for nits when hair is wet and has conditioner on it.
- 2) The best places to check for lice are in the hair behind the ears and at the nape of the neck. Sometimes you will notice bite marks that are causing the child to itch, but not everyone is bothered by itching.
- 3) If your child has lice, you must take steps to eradicate it, since it will not run its course or go away like a cold.
- 4) Lice do not jump or fly, but they can crawl at the rate of 9 inches per minute, so they can travel from one person's head to another if the children's heads are touching.

Remedies:

- 1) Some lice have become resistant to over-the-counter treatments such as Nix and Rid. Many parents do not want to use such strong products on their children even if success was certain. I would not recommend these products.
- 2) Smothering techniques: many have had good luck using the Nuvo treatment. Go online for Nuvo lice treatment to read about this approach using Cetaphil Gentle Skin Cleanser. You must repeat the process three times since the eggs are not able to be killed. As each phase of eggs hatches, you must smother the new lice. That's why the treatment must be repeated.
- 3) Tea Tree oil products: Apparently tea tree oil in high concentrations will kill everything. I do not know of an over-the-counter product that is strong enough, however. It's possible that Lice MD has enough in it to do the trick, but I cannot say for sure.

We had some success with Lice MD, but could not be sure everything was gone, so we went to LiceKnowingYou, a salon on Mercer Island. The staff is terrific and will treat you with their specially formulated products and remove all nits for you. It's expensive but really works. Their email is www.liceknowingyou.com. Phone is (206) 910-3615.

Prevention: LiceKnowingYou also sells sprays that you can use on your backpacks and hair to repel lice (contains natural ingredients such as rosemary and peppermint). A huge part of prevention is to minimize contact between kids and their hair. Hugging is a risky behavior when there are lice making the rounds at school.

Online you will find lots of info about washing linens and bagging up clothes. The laundry is a huge piece of the burden that comes with eradicating lice. When it became too burdensome to wash everything (such as coats and bedspreads), we put them in the dryer on high for 20 minutes.

Finally, I hope the stigma of dealing with lice begins to fade as more of us learn that lice actually prefer clean hair. Perhaps we can try to view it like the flu - no one thinks ill of those with the flu. We just try to stay away from others when we have the flu so we don't spread it.

Thanks and good luck,

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