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HEAD LICE

Head lice infestation is becoming increasingly common and having head lice is nothing to be ashamed of. Cleanliness and personal hygiene have not been linked to contracting head lice. Most cases of head lice are discovered by parents, who can stay ahead of head lice by detecting them early, before an epidemic breaks out.

BECOME A LICE DETECTIVE

Watch for the tell-tale clues. The primary symptom of head lice is an intense itching. This symptom is caused by louse bites to the scalp. Some people do have lice without the itch, but that's unusual. Check those at risk; head lice are most common in children aged 5 to 12. Girls are effected more than boys because girls are more likely to share combs and clothing. Long hair is not a factor in transmission. Search lice "hide-outs"- areas of the scalp most often infested are the nape of the neck and behind the ears.

CHECKING FOR LICE EGGS (NITS) IS AS IMPORTANT AS CHECKING FOR LICE

Adult lice are grayish-brown wingless insects that are as tiny as a sesame seed. They shy away from light and are very hard to see. Nits (eggs) are tiny, but they are firmly glued to the hair shaft, most often near the scalp. That's why it is easier to check for nits to confirm the presence of lice. Nits usually appear as shiny whitish ovals. Their centers get darker as they mature. After they hatch, empty nit cases look transparent. Nits hatch in just 7 to 10 days.

HOW TO CHECK FOR NITS



To see clearly, check for nits in natural light, near a window. If that's not possible, use a lamp with at least a 60-watt bulb. Use a magnifying glass to help you see. Begin by lifting and separating hairs behind the ears and at the nape of the neck. If you don't find nits in these areas, continue to examine the entire head. Nits are usually found close to the scalp. However, they can be found away from the scalp, so you have to check thoroughly.

It's easy to mistake dandruff, flakes of hairspray, or bits of dried skin for nits. The difference is that all of these are simple to remove from hair by blowing or brushing. However, it's virtually impossible to remove nits from the hair unless they are fine-tooth combed or picked with tweezers.

TREAT WITH NIX CREME RINSE

Wash hair with your regular shampoo. Towel off excess water so hair is damp but not wet. Shake the bottle of NIX well, then apply enough NIX to soak the hair and cover the scalp. Be sure to apply NIX behind the ears and at the base of the neck. Leave NIX on the hair for 10 minutes, but no longer. Start timing as soon as all the NIX has been applied. Rinse with water and towel dry hair.

REMOVE NITS

Lice treatments kill but do not remove the nits. Remove the nits using a nit comb. Part the hair into 4 sections. Select a section to work on. Start at the top of the head in the section you have picked. With one hand, lift a 1-inch strand of hair. Get the teeth of the comb as close to the scalp as possible, and always comb away from the head.

Using clips, pin back each strand of hair after you have combed out the nits. Clean the comb as you go. Wipe the nits from the comb with a tissue, and dispose of the tissue in a sealed bag to prevent reinfestation. When finished combing, recheck the entire head for nits and repeat combing if necessary.

CLEAN HOME AND PERSONAL ITEMS

Head lice can be acquired through contact with items used by an infested person. Just about every item that touches the head or shoulders can transmit lice and should be cleaned as follows:

All personal head gear (hats, hair ribbons, etc.), scarves, coats, towels, and bed linen should be cleaned by machine washing in hot water and then dried using the hot cycle of a dryer for at least 20 minutes.

Clothing, bedspreads, blankets, pillows, or stuffed animals that cannot be washed should be dry-cleaned or sealed in a plastic bag for a period of 2 weeks or sprayed with a product specifically designed for that purpose, such as RID spray .

Combs and brushes should be cleaned by soaking in hot water (at least 130 degrees) for 5 to 10 minutes.

Vacuum everywhere. It is recommended that all rooms and furniture used by infested household members be thoroughly vacuumed. Vacuum all carpets, mattresses, upholstered furnit