

U·FACTS

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION IN LANCASTER COUNTY

"HELPING YOU PUT KNOWLEDGE TO WORK"

Quick Guide for Removing Head Lice Safely

030-99

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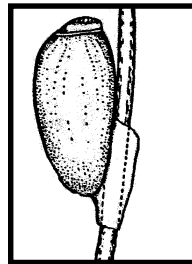
Barb Ogg, Ph.D., Extension Educator

This Quick Guide supplements the Removing Head Lice Safely video and instructional fact sheet, Head Lice Management 018-99.



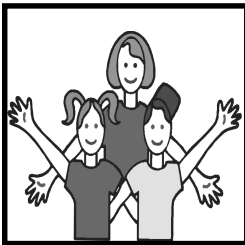
Head Lice Identification:

Adult and immature louse look similar. Adults are 1/10 to 1/8 inches long. Tanish to grayish-white. They cannot fly or hop, but can crawl quickly.



Nits are lice eggs. They are white when first laid. The nits turn coffee-colored before they hatch. Nits are glued to the hair strands about 1/2 inches from the scalp. This glue is so strong that the nits cannot be as easily removed as dandruff and other hair debris.

1. Check Every Member of the Family.



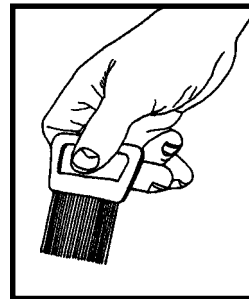
Lice are hard to see, so look for tiny white eggs (nits) on the hair near the scalp, especially at the nape of the neck and behind the ears. Check everyone for lice at least once a week.

2. Use a Product for Treating Lice.



Several products are available without a prescription or talk to your doctor about treatment for head lice. It is very important that you follow the label directions on the product EXACTLY. Remember, these products may only reduce the number of live lice.

3. Combing to remove all lice and eggs (nits).



Focus your control efforts on this step. You will need:

- box of facial tissue
- large towel to place around the child's shoulders during combing
- wide bowl of water with a squirt of dishwashing liquid added (to drown the lice)
- bobby pins or hair clips (for long hair)

The comb: Use a **metal** lice comb to help remove the eggs (nits). These combs can be purchased at a drug store. Do not use a plastic comb.

If your time is limited, it is much more important to comb the child's hair than to spend time washing clothes and linens and vacuuming your house.

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Combing the hair: Cover the hair with any type of salad oil. Remove tangles with a regular hair comb. Separate a mass of hair about the width of the metal lice comb. Insert the lice comb as close to the scalp as possible and gently pull through the hair several times.

Check the hair carefully. Pin the hair in a curl flat against the head. Dip the comb in the soapy water and use the tissue to remove lice and debris. Continue combing.

After combing: Flush the contents of the bowl down the toilet. Shampoo the hair at least twice to remove the oil. When the hair is dry, check for stray nits and remove individual hairs with scissors. It is very important to remove all of the eggs (nits).

Clean-up: Soak the lice comb for 15 minutes in hot ammonia water (1 tsp ammonia to 2 cups hot water). Or, use water only and boil the metal comb for 15 minutes. Use an old toothbrush to clean the comb. The comb can now be used on another family member.

4. Wash clothes, bedding, towels and recently worn clothing.

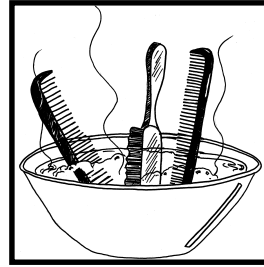


Do this step when you treat your family member—it doesn't have to be done daily. Wash in hot, soapy water in a washing machine. Drying in a 140°F dryer will kill both lice and nits. Items like stuffed animals, pillows, headphones and hats

that are not washable can be dry cleaned or stored in tightly sealed plastic bags for 2 weeks.

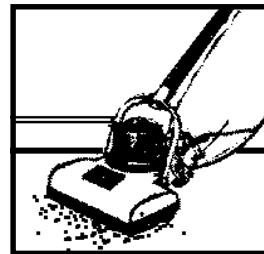
Instruct children not to share combs, brushes, hats or other articles of clothing that may be contaminated.

5. Soak combs and brushes.



Family combs and brushes should soak for at least 10 minutes in hot water (130 degrees F). If they don't already have them, it might be a good time to get every member of the home their own comb and brush. Tell your child not to share these items with others.

6. Vacuum.



Vacuum carpets, pillows, mattresses, and overstuffed furniture. Vacuum the car seats. It is recommended that you vacuum these items instead of using insecticidal sprays.

Resources:

Head Lice Management, 018-99. University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension in Lancaster County, 444 Cherrycreek Road, Suite A, Lincoln, NE 68528-1507. Phone 402-441-7180 or email: LanCo@unl.edu
Cost: Free

Removing Head Lice Safely. An 8-minute video tape that demonstrates head lice management in an easy to understand format. The video features highly magnified live lice, a combing demonstration on a child, and examples to prevent reinfestations. The video and accompanying materials were developed by the University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension and Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services Regulation and Licensure. Cost: about \$13, includes shipping and handling. For ordering information, contact University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension in Lancaster County, 444 Cherrycreek Road, Suite A, Lincoln, NE 68528-1507. Phone 402-441-7180 or email: LanCo@unl.edu

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The information in this Quick Guide was reviewed and endorsed by the Lincoln Public Schools Head Lice Task Force. The task force members include Lincoln Public School nurses, and community and public health specialists from the Lincoln/Lancaster County Health Department, Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, and University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension in Lancaster County.