

Treatment

If you suspect a child has head lice, it's important to encourage consultation with a pediatrician or family physician for proper care as soon as possible. Key treatment considerations include:

- Parents should closely follow treatment instructions. Using extra amounts or multiple applications of the same medication is not recommended, unless directed by a healthcare professional.⁵
- Resistance to some over-the-counter (OTC) head lice treatments has been reported, but the prevalence of resistance is not known.^{6,7}
- There are new prescription treatment options available that are safe and do not require nit combing. You may want to remove nits for aesthetic reasons.
- There is no scientific evidence that home remedies are effective treatments.⁸
- Family bed linens and recently used clothes, hats and towels should be washed in very hot water.⁵
- Personal articles such as combs, brushes and hair clips should also be washed in hot soapy water or thrown away.⁵

All household members and other close contacts should be checked, and anyone with evidence of an active infestation should be treated. All persons with active head lice should be treated at the same time.⁵

Communicating with Families

- Head lice infestations can have a considerable psychological impact on children and parents, who may feel stigmatized and ostracized.^{9,10}
- School nurses can help by establishing supportive relationships, prevent stigmatization in the community, maintain privacy and confidentiality, and provide ongoing support and reassurance.^{11,12,13,14}
- Head lice education and resources are essential to helping correct misinformation and misperceptions. Such information can educate parents on all available treatment options, both OTC and prescription products.

References

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