

Healthwatch: Head Lice Not just a “Nit-Pick”-ing Problem

Children usually catch lice by contact with other infested children during normal play and social interactions. How does a parent tell if their child has head lice? Frequent scratching is the most common indicator of head lice.

Lice are usually treated with the application of lice-killing shampoo or lotion on the hair and scalp. The most commonly used shampoos or lotions contain permethrins or pyrethrins, which kill adult lice and nits (eggs).

Once treatment begins, follow up applications are often recommended after seven to ten days. Health care providers may also recommend prescription shampoo.

Killing any potential sources of re-infestation is also recommended. Machine-washing bed linens will kill both lice and nits. Non-washable items may be stored in a plastic bag for 10-14 days. Use of insecticide spray is not recommended.



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