

# Preventing and Treating Lice:

## WHAT EVERY PARENT NEEDS TO KNOW

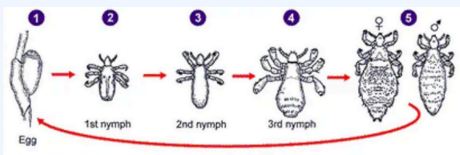


### What is Lice?

Lice are tiny gray insects about the size of a sesame seed that can irritate the scalp. They're hard to see, but their white eggs, called nits, cling firmly to hair near the scalp and don't shake off like dandruff. Those affected by lice often experience an itchy scalp. However, lice do not spread diseases and won't make you feel unwell.

### Lice Life Cycle

Nits hatch into lice within a week and can survive off the scalp in the meantime, so thorough home cleaning is crucial during treatment. Adult lice live on the scalp for up to three weeks, feeding frequently, but cannot survive more than a day without a blood source



### Transmission

Only live lice are contagious, typically spreading through prolonged head-to-head contact. While rare, indirect transmission can occur via shared items like hats or hairbrushes. Most lice spread happens at home, often during sleepovers or bed-sharing.

### Treatment

- Use anti-lice shampoo (e.g., Nix) as directed.
- Wash hair with regular shampoo, towel dry, and skip conditioner.
- Apply 2 ounces of Nix to damp hair, massaging to the roots.
- Leave on for 10 minutes, rinse, and towel dry. No conditioner.
- Repeat in 9 days to kill any surviving nits.
- Prescription options are available—consult your doctor.
- Avoid shampooing for 48 hours after treatment.



### Preventive Spread

- Vacuum your child's room and the entire house.
- Soak hairbrushes for 1 hour in anti-lice shampoo solution.
- Wash bedding and clothes worn in the last 3 days in hot water (130°F).
- For items that can't be washed, seal them in plastic bags for 2 weeks.
- Avoid sharing combs or brushes among family members.

### Most Importantly

- Lice are not caused by poor cleanliness; they just happen.
- Follow the steps above to eliminate lice and nits.
- Children can return to school or daycare after treatment, as nits are not contagious.
- Contact your doctor if you're unsure, need additional treatment, or have questions.