



Head Lice Guidelines

A Saginaw Township Community School District guide to identify, treat, manage and prevent head lice



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STCS Head Lice Guidelines

The STCS district has developed the following head lice guidelines in accordance with the Michigan Department of Community Health and Michigan Department of Education. Documentation to support these guidelines can be found in the “Michigan Head Lice Manual”.

The guidelines focus on exclusion of active infestations only. These are defined as the presence of live lice or nits found within ¼ inch of the scalp. Nits that are found beyond ¼” of the scalp have more than likely hatched or are no longer viable.

- Any student with live lice may remain in school until the end of the school day. Immediate treatment at home is advised. The student will be readmitted to school after treatment and examination. If, upon examination, the school-designated personnel finds no live lice on the child, the child may reenter the school.
- Any student with nits (farther than ¼ ” from scalp) should be allowed in school.
- Parents should remove nits daily and treat if live lice are observed.

Procedures

When a member of school staff suspects a child is infested with head lice, the following procedures should be followed.

- The child should be restricted from activities involving close contact (i.e. hugging) or sharing personal items (i.e. hats, clothing, brushes) with other children.
- The parent/guardian must be notified, preferably by verbal communication. **Immediate removal of the child is unnecessary.** The child may be sent home at the end of the day. Children should be allowed to ride the school bus home.
- A letter should be sent home notifying classmates’ parents that a case of head lice is suspected and asking them to check all of their children for head lice. Provide parents with an information sheet on head lice infestation and treatment options.

Tips for Preventing Transmission

- Teach children not to share combs, brushes, hair ornaments, hats, caps, scarves, headsets or any other personal headgear.
- Do not try on other people's hats even in department stores.
- Teach children to hang coats separately – placing hats and scarves inside coat/jacket sleeves.
- Shared headgear, (i.e. helmets) should be cleaned and disinfected with Lysol or rubbing alcohol before being issued to other students.
- Encourage parents to check their children regularly for head lice.
- At the beginning of each school year, an informational head lice sheet should be sent home advising parents to check their children regularly.

Tips for Cleaning the School Environment

- Vacuum all floors, rugs, pillows, carpet squares, and upholstered furniture. There is no need to discard the vacuum bag after cleaning except for aesthetic purposes.
- Combs and brushes used on an infected individual should be immersed in water hotter than 103 degrees, Lysol, rubbing alcohol or a pediculicide for one hour.
- Play clothing, linens, smocks and cloth toys worn or handled by an infested individual within 2 days before diagnosis should be washed in water hotter than 130 degrees, or machine dried at the highest heat setting for at least 30 minutes.
- Other articles may be dry-cleaned or sealed in a plastic bag for at least 14 days at room temperature or 2 hours in below freezing temperatures.
- It is **not** necessary to hire an exterminator
- Spraying or fogging schools with insecticides or pediculicides is **not** recommended, and may be harmful if used in a poorly ventilated area.



Date

Dear Parents/Guardians,

We are sending this letter to all parents to increase head lice awareness so that you may take steps at home to help prevent your child from becoming infested with head lice. Any time children come together, particularly at the start of the school year or any social grouping like Girl/Cub Scouts, Brownies or Little League, head lice cases commonly increase. Please encourage your child not to share or trade personal items such as hats, combs, brushes, headbands, barrettes, as well as helmets or headphones with foam ear protectors.

Direct, physical, head-to-head contact is the usual method of transmission. Lice do not jump, fly or swim. They are however, good crawlers. Check your child's head weekly for lice and/or nits (eggs). Mature lice, which are not bigger than a sesame seed, avoid light and are hard to see. Lice eggs or "nits" are usually found close to the scalp—usually within $\frac{1}{4}$ inch. They appear as tiny whitish ovals that are "glued" to the hair shaft. They cannot easily be flicked away as dandruff can. Head lice do not transmit disease and are not a serious medical condition. They cannot survive on your pets. If you find head lice on your child, please notify the school and keep him or her home until properly treated. Continue to examine all family members for 3 weeks and treat if live lice or nits close to the scalp are found.

Check Regularly - Treat Quickly

Help Keep Head Lice Off Your Child

For more information regarding head lice or its treatment, please feel free to contact the school office or the Saginaw Community Health Department. Thank you for your help and support.

Sincerely,



Dear Parent/Guardian:

A case of head lice has been found in the school. The parents of all students are being notified via this letter:

**This is not cause for panic.
It is cause for action to be taken to prevent head lice.
Treat/remove any head lice or nits found on your child's head.**

It is extremely important for you to check your child's head TODAY. Keep checking every 2 days until there are not head lice found for 10 consecutive days.

The best way to prevent transmission:

- Teach children not to share combs, brushes, hair ornaments, hats, scarves, headsets, or any other personal headgear.
- Do not try on other people's hats (even in department stores).
- Teach children to hang coats separately – placing hats and scarves inside coat/jacket sleeves.
- Clean or disinfect shared headgear (i.e. helmets) with Lysol or rubbing alcohol before being used by others.
- Conduct regular head checks of your child

If head lice are found on your child:

- Check others in the household for signs of head lice or nits. If found, complete remaining steps on all infected individuals.
- Remove nits from the head by combing. This is the most important lice control measure. Complete nit removal is time-consuming but is critical for successful treatment.
- Use an effective head lice treatment.
- Remove all of the lice and nits from the environment by washing or vacuuming. There is no need to spray pesticides at home
- Perform daily head checks and remove nits for 3 weeks until head lice are gone. Continue to check your child weekly to detect reinfestation.

If you have difficulties treating the head lice on your child, please contact the school, local health department, or your child's physician.

Sincerely

What Can the School Do to Help Control and Prevent Head Lice?

Clean the School Environment:

- ✓ Vacuum all floors, rugs, pillows, carpet squares, and upholstered furniture. There is no need to discard the vacuum bag after cleaning except for aesthetic purposes.
- ✓ Play clothing, linens, art smocks, stuffed animals, and cloth toys used by an infested child within 2 days before diagnosis should be washed in hot water, or machine dried at the highest heat setting for at least 30 minutes.
- ✓ Spraying or fogging schools with insecticides or pediculicides is **NOT RECOMMENDED**, and may be harmful if used in poorly ventilated areas.
- ✓ Shared headgear, headphones, and/or helmets should be cleaned and disinfected with Lysol® or rubbing alcohol before being used by other people.

To Prevent Transmission:

- ✓ Teach children not to share or use their friends' combs, brushes, hair ornaments, hats, caps, scarves, headphones with foam protectors, coats, pillows, or any other personal headgear.
- ✓ If possible, provide separate lockers or "cubby holes" for each child's coat and clothing. Consider separate plastic bags for each child to put their personal items in before hanging on hooks if no lockers are available.
- ✓ Teach children to place their hats, mittens and scarves inside coat/jacket sleeves before hanging on hooks if coats can hang separately.
- ✓ Pets in the classroom do not need to be treated and cannot maintain or transmit lice.
- ✓ Begin head lice education within the classrooms so that children can understand head lice and what they can do to help prevent the spread of lice.

Head Lice Screening Procedure

Suggested equipment and supplies:

- ✓ Disposable applicator sticks or tongue depressors
- ✓ Strong source of natural light, high intensity lamp
- ✓ Magnifying glass
- ✓ Disposable gloves (optional)
- ✓ Trash can with garbage bags
- ✓ Transparent Tape
- ✓ Chair/privacy for person being screened
- ✓ Copy or knowledge of school district's head lice policy

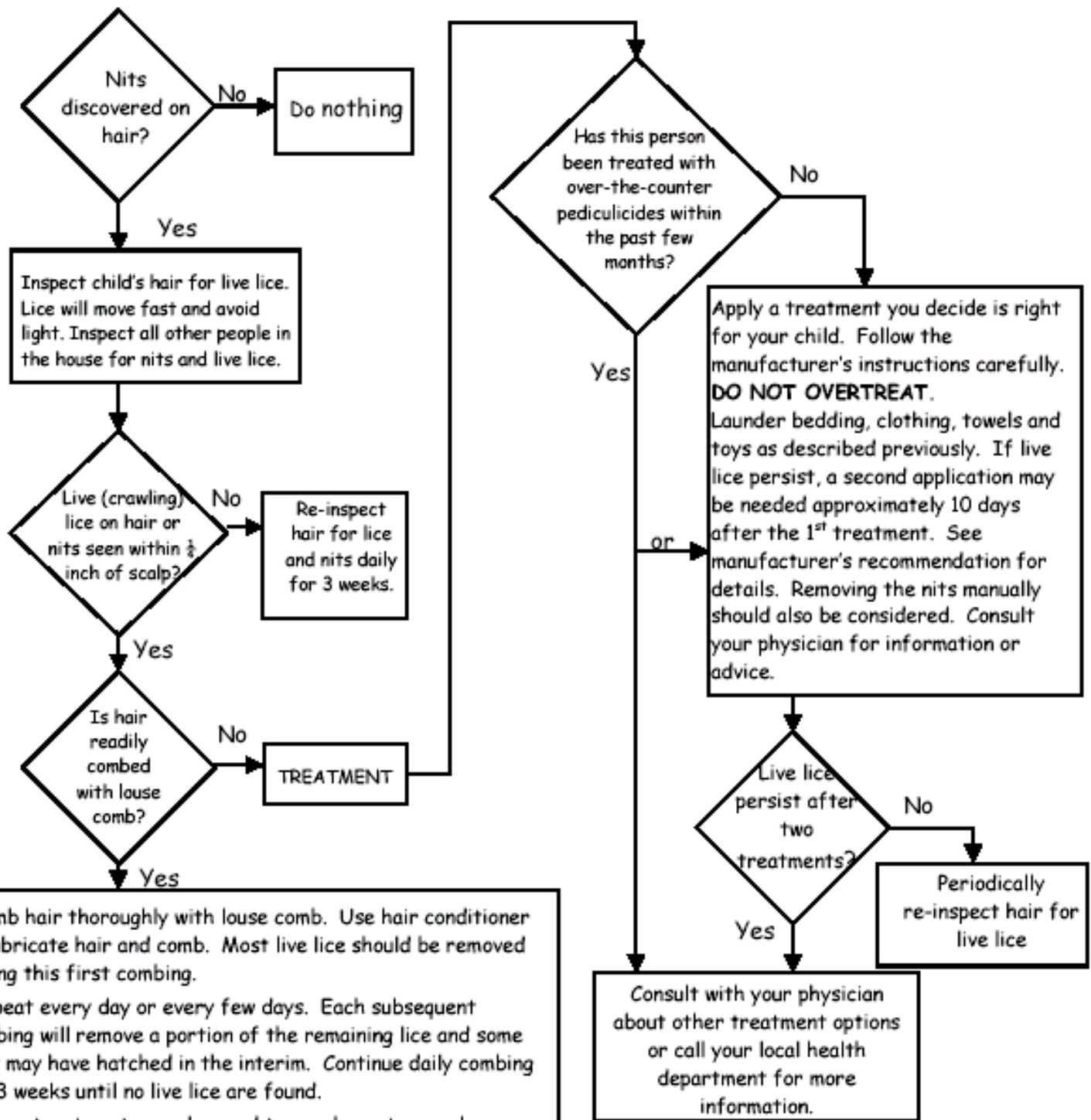
Identification of head lice is made by direct inspection of the hair and scalp for the presence of live lice and nits. *More often than not, identification will be achieved by seeing attached nits rather than by crawling lice.* Lice and nits are most often found in the hair behind the ears and at the back of the neck.

Things to Know:

- Live lice are about the size of a sesame seed, usually brown, and move quickly away from light.
- Nits are tiny, yellowish-white oval eggs firmly attached at an angle to the hair shaft.
- Be sure not to confuse nits with hair debris such as desquamated epithelial cell (DEC) plugs (bright white irregularly shaped clumps of dandruff stuck to the hair shaft), or hair casts (elongated segments of dandruff encircling the hair shaft). Children who have been over-applied with lice treatments often have these artifacts, which may confuse identification.

Screening Procedure:

1. Begin by separating the hair into small sections.
2. Using a natural light or high intensity lamp and magnifying glass if needed, examine the hair behind the ears, back of the neck and scalp for crawling lice or nits.
3. If no lice or nits are found in these areas, continue to inspect the rest of the head.



*Comb hair thoroughly with louse comb. Use hair conditioner to lubricate hair and comb. Most live lice should be removed during this first combing.

*Repeat every day or every few days. Each subsequent combing will remove a portion of the remaining lice and some that may have hatched in the interim. Continue daily combing for 3 weeks until no live lice are found.

*Other treatments may be used to supplement or replace combing.

*Removal of nits after treatment is a personal choice, as they are likely to be all dead or hatched.

*Launder bedding, clothes, towels and toys used by the child. Use water at least 130F and dry on high heat for 30 minutes.

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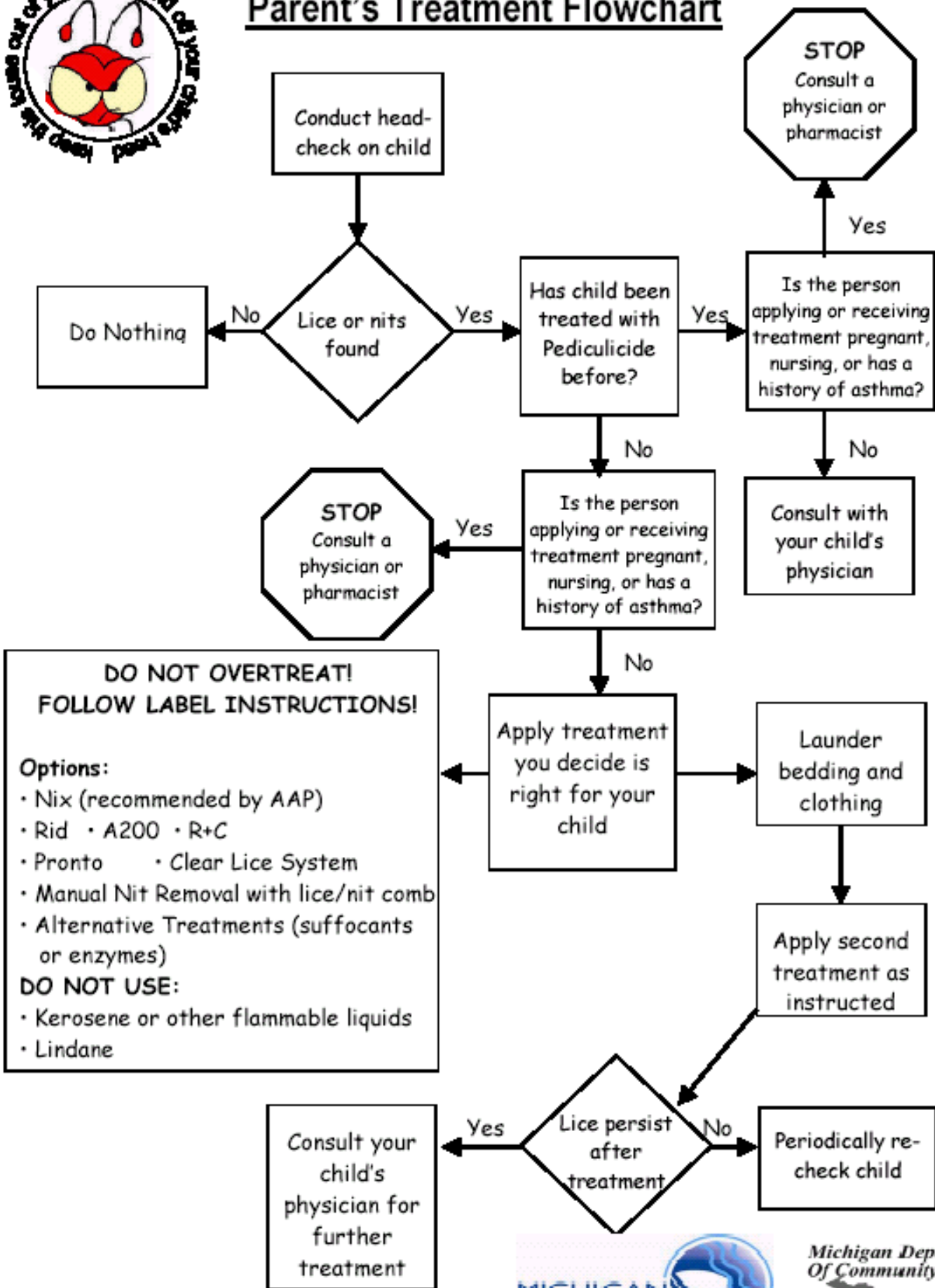
<http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/headlice.html>

10 Steps to Keep Ahead of Head Lice

- 1) Watch for signs of head lice, such as frequent head scratching. Anyone can get lice, mainly from direct head-to-head contact, sharing hats, brushes, etc.
- 2) Check all family members for lice and nits (lice eggs) at least once a week.
- 3) Be sure not to confuse nits with hair debris, (i.e., dandruff, hair spray droplets or hair casts). Nits are yellowish-white, oval shaped and are attached at an angle to the side of the hair shaft.
- 4) Consult a pharmacist or physician before applying pesticides or other lice treatments if anyone involved is pregnant or nursing, has allergies, asthma, or has nits in the eyebrows or lashes. Never use a pesticide or lice treatment on or near the eyes.
- 5) Consider all of your treatment options. Remember, lice-killing products are pesticides and must be used with caution. If you choose alternative methods, they may not have been studied thoroughly enough to determine long-term outcomes. The only completely safe alternative is manual removal by combing.
- 6) Remove all nits. Separate hair sections and remove nits with a lice comb, baby safe scissors or your fingernails.
- 7) For lice treatment, follow package directions carefully. Use the products over the sink, not in the tub!
- 8) Wash bedding and recently worn clothing in hot water (above 130°F) and dry in high heat for 30 minutes. Combs and brushes should be soaked in hot water (not boiling) for 10 minutes.
- 9) Avoid lice sprays! Vacuuming is the safest and best way to remove lice or fallen hairs with attached nits from furniture, rugs, stuffed animals and car seats.
- 10) Notify your child's school, camp, child-care provider, play partners, and neighborhood parents. Check for lice on a regular basis.



Parent's Treatment Flowchart



**DO NOT OVERTREAT!
FOLLOW LABEL INSTRUCTIONS!**

Options:

- Nix (recommended by AAP)
- Rid • A200 • R+C
- Pronto • Clear Lice System
- Manual Nit Removal with lice/nit comb
- Alternative Treatments (suffocants or enzymes)

DO NOT USE:

- Kerosene or other flammable liquids
- Lindane



10 Days to Freedom from Head Lice

Day 1

- Notify or check all exposed friends and family members.
- Treat only those who are infested with live lice or have evidence of nits laid ¼ inch from the scalp.
- Wash all bedding, clothing, and toys in hot water (130°F) and dry on high heat for 30 minutes.
- Vacuum all carpeting, furniture and car upholstery.

Day 2

- Vacuum.
- Check all members of home for nits that may have been missed.
- Comb/pick nits out of hair.

Day 3

- Vacuum.
- Check all members of home for nits that may have been missed.
- Comb/pick nits out of hair.

Day 4

- Vacuum.
- Check all members of home for nits that may have been missed.
- Comb/pick nits out of hair.

Day 5

- Vacuum.
- Check all members of home for nits that may have been missed.
- Comb/pick nits out of hair.

Day 6

- Vacuum.
- Check all members of home for nits that may have been missed.
- Comb/pick nits out of hair.

Day 7

- Vacuum.
- Check all members of home for nits that may have been missed.
- If nits or lice are still seen, repeat treatment if indicated by instructions.

Day 8

- Vacuum.
- Check all members of home for nits that may have been missed.
- Comb/pick nits out of hair.
- If nits or lice are still seen, repeat treatment if indicated by instructions.

Day 9

- Vacuum.
- Check all members of home for nits that may have been missed.
- If nits or lice are still seen, repeat treatment if indicated by instructions.

Day 10

- Vacuum.
- Check all members of home for nits that may have been missed.
- Comb/pick nits out of hair.
- If nits or lice are still seen, repeat treatment if indicated by instructions.

**** Some lice treatments may indicate a second treatment after 7 to 10 days. Please follow the manufacturer's instructions carefully and only apply when it is suggested. This chart serves as a reminder only for days 7,8,9, and 10. ****

Further information on Head Lice can be obtained from the Michigan Head Lice Manual in the STCS forms folder-Health (school nurse).

Special Thanks to
Michigan Department of Community Health
Michigan Department of Education