

Notes On Bug Busting

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Margaret Reeves

I will not use pesticides on my daughter's hair. Here is some good information about lice and lice treatment alternatives. Remember, lice are a real nuisance but generally not a health hazard. Pesticides, on the other hand, represent true hazards.

My preferred treatment – called “bug busting”

Very simple, based on the life cycle of lice, and effective.

1. Wash hair with shampoo as you would normally do.
2. Put in LOTS of conditioner
3. Using a regular comb, untangle the hair
4. Use a plastic lice comb (the metal ones are harder to see the lice on and more uncomfortable), beveled side towards the scalp. Methodically comb through small sections until you see no lice. I use 3 or 4 big hair clips (my daughter has a TON of long, thick, curly hair) to section off combed and not-yet combed hair. Go from roots to tip of hair – several times each section.
5. After each pass I make sure I get everything off the comb by rinsing it in a large yogurt container with clear water (then I can go through the water in our white sink to see what I got).
6. The instructions I have say to then rinse out conditioner, comb out with regular comb and repeat the section-by-section combing with the lice comb on dripping wet hair. I have opted to do the first thorough combing many times per section rather than repeat without conditioner because it would be hard to get the comb through without the conditioner.
7. Count this as DAY 1. REPEAT this whole process on DAY 5, DAY 9 and DAY 13. That's three clear days between. This will remove lice hatching from any eggs before they can spread or reproduce.

The lice are tiny. There are three nymph stages before the adult stage (about 2.5 mm or between 1/16 and 1/8”). If you get out all the adults, then your child will probably no longer give them to another person. The nymph stages tend to stay on the head where they hatch. If you find adults on day 5 or later, then the child has caught them again.

Hair must stay wet while doing this. Wet lice stay still. Dry ones move around.

At the 2nd, 3rd and 4th sessions all the lice should be no bigger than just a hair over 2mm (the size of the 3rd nymphal stage).

Life cycle:

Eggs glued on hair take 7-10 days to hatch. 6-7 days to go through the three nymphal stages. The last lice hatching on day 10 will be combed out on day 13. Only empty egg shells may remain.

Last year (2006) I did use the Lice R Gone shampoo and it seemed to work well.

5/19/07

From "Marguerite Young:

Our treatment (recommended by Packard Childrens center)

We highly recommend the Licemeister nit comb. We use olive oil (mayonnaise or conditioner) with several drops of tea tree and rosemary or eucalyptus oil mixed in.

Massage into scalp, cover with shower cap for an hour, thoroughly comb through hair with lice comb using a tissue to wipe and check for nits and lice, and then follow with a shampoo. Though some say it's unnecessary we wash bedding in hot water and change out the pillows that were in use for a couple of days (**lice only live for 55 hours away from the human head**, and nits are only on hair shafts). You can also remove stuffies and other non washables to a plastic bag for a couple of days.

1. Some very good, practical information is available from Beyond Pesticides:

<http://www.beyondpesticides.org/>

Specifically, www.beyondpesticides.org/alternatives/factsheets/Head%20Lice%20Control2.PDF

2. Dr. Marion Moses recommends <http://www.licebgone.com/order.html>

See her website, Pesticide Education Center at: <http://www.pesticides.org/>

3. This product, "Lice R Gone" looks good and safe. I have no third party verification.

<http://www.licergone.com/> I've used this product and it seems to work quite well.

4. Some general information is available at:

<http://www.licescabiesandbedbugs.com/Head-Lice-Body-Lice-and-Pubic-Lice-Products-Lice-Nits-and-Head-Louse-Treatments/Ginesis-NitFreeKit.asp?aff=5334>

This website promotes a product but I could not find information about the active ingredients so I do not recommend their product.

There are three forms of head lice.

Louse is the term used to describe an adult. An adult louse is about the size of a sesame seed and tan to grayish-white in color. Adult lice may live up to 30 days on a person's head, and the female can lay between 100 to 200 eggs during that lifespan.

Nit is the term for a louse egg. They are very hard to see and may be confused with hair spray droplets or dandruff. Nits are oval and usually yellow to white.

Nymph is the term for a newly hatched baby louse. It differs from an adult louse only in size. Nymphs mature into adults in about 7 days.

When a female louse finds its way onto the head of a person, she starts laying eggs, or nits, along with a glue that firmly attaches the nits to the hair close to the scalp. An adult female can deposit 6-8 nits in 2 days!

In a week or so, the nits hatch, and the newborn lice take their first meal of blood from the person's head by attaching itself to the hair shaft, an inch from the scalp.

It takes about 10 days for a newborn louse to become an adult. Once an adult, the female louse can start laying eggs. This means it only takes 16 days for an egg (nit) to become a female louse capable of laying more eggs! Adult lice live for 9-10 days, making the total life span of a louse from egg to adult about 25 days.

How Head Lice Spread

Head Lice spread from person to person when people are in close contact or when they share clothing or personal items that have been in contact with the head or neck -- coats, scarves, hats, brushes and combs.

Remember...

Head Lice do not fly or jump; they can only crawl.

Head Lice can infest anyone...young, old, rich, poor, clean or dirty.

Avoid sharing personal items such as hats, coats, brushes, combs, and pillows.

Nit Tips

Nits are hard to remove from the hair.

Nits feel like little grains of sand stuck to the hair. You may feel them before you see them.

Dandruff can be flicked off with your finger. Nits cannot.

Nits are tiny and yellowish-white. Dandruff is larger and white.