

How to Remove Nits (Lice Eggs)

Nit Picking

The treatment of head lice is a long process that can take up to 21 days.

The manual removal of the nits (lice eggs) must be done. Nit removal is the most important step.

Nit picking needs to be done daily to remove any nits that may be present. If all the nits are not removed, they will hatch into crawling lice, and the female lice will lay more eggs.

A nit comb (fine tooth comb) is recommended for finding and removing nits from the head. The comb can be found in your local pharmacy.

Nit removal done properly takes time. Be patient and allow your child to watch a movie, watch television, read a book, or play a game while it is being done.

Instructions:

- Work under good light on wet hair.
- Visibility is important. A magnifying glass or reading glasses from the pharmacy may help you see the tiny eggs.
- Use a regular brush or comb to remove tangles, divide the hair in sections, and fasten off hair that is not being worked on with a hairclip.
- Use fingernails (may be more effective) or the nit comb and go through each section of hair from the scalp to the end of the hair. The nit comb recommended would have round metal or plastic teeth that are 4-5 cm long and have a separation of 1 mm. Dispose of lice nits carefully in the trash or toilet.
- Look through each section of hair and remove any live lice or nits attached to the hair, then go on to the next section of hair until the entire scalp has been completed and no more lice or nits are found.
- **Nit picking needs to be done daily** until all nits are gone. Extra shampoo treatment is advisable.
- Wash combs, brushes or anything used to search the head with soap and water, then soak these items in rubbing alcohol, Lysol®, or hot water for 10 minutes.

Sources: CPS Infectious Diseases and Immunization Committee, University of Toronto, Public Health, Framingham School Health Services, Harvard School of Public Health