

ST. CLAIR COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDED HEAD LICE TREATMENTS

Pediculocidal Treatment:

Head lice infestations may be treated with “over the counter” lice killing shampoos that destroy the louse by attacking its nervous system. Most commercial lice killing shampoos (pediculocides) will kill the live bugs, but no lice killing shampoo will kill **all** the louse eggs (nits). Eggs must be removed by combing with a nit comb and pulling them out with your fingers. Lice killing pediculocidal shampoos such as Rid or Nix should be applied and removed strictly according to package instructions.

Pediculocidal shampoos should not be used as preventive therapy on other members of the family who do not have head lice.

Alternative Treatment:

Head lice infestations may also be treated with a product that suffocates the live lice and the baby lice (nymphs) in the eggs. Common vegetable oil or a heavier weight oil such as olive oil may be used. Eggs must be removed by combing with a nit comb and pulling them out with your fingers.

- Oil needs to be applied so it thoroughly coats each hair as well as the scalp. Apply the product ***thickly*** so it soaks the hair and scalp. **Leave the product on the hair 8-12 hours or overnight.** Protect pillows by placing a towel under the head. **Do not** apply plastic caps or wraps to the head as they could become a suffocation risk.
- After using the oil treatment, wash the hair with a grease cutting dish soap such as DAWN or JOY. Dish soap is not “tear free”. Avoid getting the soap in the eyes. Apply liquid dish soap or shampoo directly to the hair **BEFORE** wetting it with water. Work the soap through the hair then add water. It may take a second washing to remove the oil. ***After washing, go through the hair and look for any remaining nits, removing them by hand.***
- When the hair is washed and dry, comb through with a lice comb. Comb through a section at a time, checking and cleaning the comb for lice and nits (eggs) after every stroke. Remove the lice and nits from the comb with a tissue, a toothpick or rinse the comb in hot water. Inspect the hair carefully and use your fingers to pick or slide any nits off that weren’t removed by the comb. **The inspection and removal of nits by hand cannot be emphasized enough and is in fact the most important part of the treatment.**
- This treatment should be repeated every 2-3 days for two weeks to kill any lice that have hatched from any nits missed during the initial treatment. It is very important to pick and comb all nits from the hair and inspect the hair daily for the next 14 days, followed by weekly inspections.

Endorsed by the National Pediculosis Association (NPA).