

Head Lice Treatment Products

Use a lice treatment product only if you find lice or nits (eggs) on your body. Treatment products are mild insecticides, and you should use them only when you really need to.

Home remedies such as kerosene and other stronger insecticides are dangerous! Prescription medical treatments that are approved for head lice are not more effective than products available over the counter.

Usually, the easiest and most effective way to get rid of head lice is an over-the-counter lice treatment product, such as 1 percent permethrin. Carefully follow the package instructions, don't use conditioner, and make sure you leave it on the full length of time recommended. This will probably kill the lice and the hatching nits for long enough to get rid of them.

Some experts do not recommend removing nits after treatment with a lice product. This assumes the products always work. Unfortunately, there are reports of lice resistance to various products, including 1 percent permethrin. If you find live lice the day after you've used the treatment as directed on the product package, it is possible they are resistant to that product. It may be necessary to contact your healthcare

provider to recommend a different product. Carefully follow the treatment instructions on the box or package insert.

If the treatment doesn't work the first time after using the product as directed on the label, it probably won't work any better the second time. Just as there are different opinions about the safety of different pesticide uses in agriculture and in home environments, experts don't agree about the safety of repeat treatments with lice products. It is usually wisest to avoid a repeated dose of any product unless it is used to control a serious illness. The package inserts for lice products do not recommend more than two applications because manufacturers have not studied the safety of repeated doses over time.

Each use of a lice product increases the chance of scalp burns and toxic levels of insecticide's being absorbed through the skin...particularly in children and pregnant women. It is also possible to develop an allergy to these products. For these reasons, it is recommended that lice treatment products not be repeated before 7 days and never used more than twice a year.



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The Olive Oil Treatment

After you have used a lice treatment product, saturate the hair with olive oil to smother any remaining live lice and to loosen the nits for removal. Cover the head to protect clothing, linens, etc., and allow the oil to remain on the hair overnight or for 8 hours. After 8 hours of the olive oil treatment, shampoo hair twice with an oily-hair shampoo to remove the olive oil. Rinse thoroughly before checking for lice and removing nits. Follow the procedure listed in "The Head Exam" to check for and remove nits.

Sometimes, when many people in a group have lice, they may have them several times over a few months. If it has been too soon to

use a lice treatment product again for any reason, you CAN remove all head lice and nits without using another lice treatment product. It simply requires work and knowing how. Repeat the olive oil treatment and nit removal every 4 days for 3 weeks to prevent lice from successfully reproducing.

Even if you have killed the lice with a treatment, if the nits are not removed, you may not be able to tell that it worked. For this reason, some experts recommend a "no nit" return-to-school policy.

For more information, see this site:
http://www.cdc.gov/lice/head/faqs_treat.html.



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M975

Extension Service of Mississippi State University, cooperating with U.S. Department of Agriculture. Published in furtherance of Acts of Congress, May 8 and June 30, 1914. MELISSA J. MIXON, Interim Director

POD 05-10