

THE FIVE STEP BATTLE PLAN

Step one: Use an over-the counter pediculicide.

This step is optional.

Remember, over the last several years, more and more evidence has come to light that head lice are developing resistance to pediculicidal products. Whether or not you choose to use a pediculicide is a personal decision that should be made in collaboration with your family physician.

Check with your physician to make sure that you or your child do not have allergies that will react to the active ingredients in the pediculicide has been selected.

How to use a Pediculicide

1. If you choose to use a permethrin or pyrethrin product, first wash the hair with a good clarifying shampoo like Prell to strip the hair of any other substances. Then dry the hair thoroughly.
2. Work at a sink, not in a tub or shower so the pesticide only goes on the child's head. Cover the child's eyes with a wash cloth and use a full application. Apply the shampoo or crème rinse to dry hair, directly onto the scalp and massage it through the hair and scalp thoroughly.
3. Using a timer, leave the pesticide on the head for the amount of time directed on the package and no longer. Wash it out and use a regular crème rinse or detangler. (Nix instructions indicate that other products interfere with the "residual effect" of permethrin, but since the residual effect may not be effective, make life easier for you and your child by making the hair easier to comb through.)

Step 2: The Olive Oil Treatment

1. For best results, the olive oil treatment should be done on days 1, 5, 9, 13, 17, and 21. If you choose to skip the pediculicide, add Day 2 to the list above. These treatment days disrupt the life cycle of the louse and maximize your chances of eliminating all the lice. It is best to adhere to the exact treatment days to ensure successful completion of the program.
2. Using an applicator bottle, part the hair and apply the olive oil directly onto the scalp.
3. Massage it in thoroughly, making sure to saturate the hair and scalp.
4. Cover the head with a plastic shower cap and keep it in place with a bandanna or bathing cap.
5. Leave the oil on for eight (8) hours.

Step 3 Clean the Environment

1. Clean the environment once.
2. Put your brushes away and use combs until the infestation is over.
3. Vacuum or use a lint remover anyplace where infested heads have rested.
4. Use clean towels each time you wash the hair.
5. Use the clothes dryer on high for 30 minutes for any items that will not be harmed in the dryer. The vacuum or lint remover can be used on anything else.

Step 4: The Comb Out – Comb the Lice Out of Your Hair

1. Combing out lice and nits is an extremely important step in eliminating an infestation.
2. Olive oil smothers the lice by covering holes in their sides called spiracles, through which they breathe oxygen. If you wash out the olive without combing out any adult lice first, any lice that are not completely dead will resume activity.
3. After the oil has been in the hair for eight (8) hours, leave the oil in the hair and comb out eh hair with a regular clean comb to remove tangles. Then use a good nit comb to remove both nits and lice.
4. Olive oil also seems to loosen nits, making them easier to comb put, but only while the oil remains on the head.

Combing to remove bugs:

1. Comb along the entire scalp, with the comb in constant contact with, but not scraping, the scalp. Clean the comb frequently with a tissue.
2. Don't panic if you comb out a live louse or two. It may not have been covered sufficiently with the oil, or perhaps it was molting while you were oiling (Nymphs or baby lice shed their outer shell three times while they are maturing. This interferes with the smothering technique and is the reason you must continue oiling at specific intervals over the entire three-week cycle.) A louse that is not at least partially covered in oil will easily avoid the nit comb.

Combing to remove nits:

1. Pin hair into sections.
2. Using your fingers, take a very thin section of hair. Starting at the scalp, comb from the scalp all the way to the end of the hair, being careful not to scrap the scalp.

3. Comb each section several times from different directions and clean the comb frequently with a tissue.

Step 5: Pick out any nits you've missed

1. Pour plenty of clarifying shampoo for oily hair directly onto the oily head. Don't wet the head until you have worked the shampoo through the hair.
2. Rinse and lather again. Two to three lathers should remove the oil.
3. Lice are killed by dry heat. So, dry the hair with a hair dryer, being careful not to burn your child.
4. Check for and remove any remaining nits manually

Divide the hair and pull one half of the hair into a ponytail. Check the other side by systematically moving around the head and pinning the hair out of the ways as you finish each strand.

Take a thin strand of hair in your fingers and check both sides of the hair carefully for nits. The newest nits are smallest and closest to the scalp. These are the most difficult to see. Use a vision visor or a binocular magnifier that fits over your head like goggles if needed.

Grasp the nit with your fingernail and pull it all the way off the hair.

5. Deposit the nit onto an oily tissue and flush the tissue.
6. When you have finished removing the nits, be sure to wash you hands carefully and use a nailbrush. Lice can easily hide under nails.

Repeat steps 2 (the olive oil treatment), 4 (the comb out), and 5 (the nit check and pick) on the following days over the three week life cycle of the louse.

Days: 1, 5, 9, 13, 17, and 21.

Add Day 2 if you chose not to use a pediculicide.