

Quick Parent Guide: Understanding & Managing Head Lice

Key Facts:

- Head lice do not jump, fly, burrow, or spread disease (CDC & AAP).
- Anyone can get lice; an infestation has nothing to do with cleanliness or hygiene.

1. Life Cycle of Head Lice

Stage	Timeline	Key Characteristics
Egg / Nit	Days 0–9	Firmly glued to the hair shaft within 1/4 inch of the scalp. Requires scalp heat to incubate.
Nymph	Days 9–19	Hatches from egg, molts 3 times over 7–10 days into an adult.
Adult	Days 20–30+	Sesame-seed sized; lays 6–10 eggs daily. Cannot survive off the human scalp past 24–48 hours.

2. Priority Strategy: Manual Wet-Combing

Manual wet-combing with a fine-toothed metal comb is the single most reliable defense against lice. Lice cannot develop resistance to mechanical removal.

Why sliding eggs stops hatching

Lice eggs depend entirely on constant warmth from the scalp to incubate. Sliding an attached egg down the hair shaft (farther than 1/4 inch from the scalp) deprives it of vital body heat, neutralizing it so it cannot hatch.

How to Comb Out

1. **Lubricate:** Generously coat damp hair with white hair conditioner or dimethicone oil to immobilize live lice.
2. **Detangle:** Run a regular wide-tooth comb through first.
3. **Section & Scrape:** Part hair into small 1-inch sections under bright light. Pull the metal lice comb firmly from the scalp through the ends.
4. **Wipe:** Wipe the comb onto a white paper towel after every pass to inspect for lice or nits.
5. **Routine:** Repeat every 2–3 days for 2 weeks during active cases; perform a quick 5-minute check once weekly for prevention.

3. Treatment Comparison

Method	Type	Effectiveness & Notes
Mechanical	Fine-toothed metal comb	Non-toxic, highly effective, zero resistance risk.
Physical Smothering	Dimethicone-based lotions	Coats lice and blocks respiration. Non-toxic; resistance is impossible.
Over-the-Counter	Permethrin / Pyrethrin Shampoos	e.g., Nix, RID. Requires 2nd treatment on Day 9. Some "super lice" show resistance.
Prescription	Spinosad / Topical Ivermectin	Pediatrician-prescribed for persistent or resistant infestations.

4. Recommended Tools & Links

- **Metal Comb:** [OwnHealer Professional Metal Lice Comb Set](#) (Precision fine-toothed metal comb to strip lice and nits).

5. Household Cleaning Realities

- **Avoid pesticide sprays:** Head lice cannot survive off the scalp for more than 1–2 days; chemical sprays in homes or cars are unnecessary and unsafe.
- **Bedding & Clothes:** Machine wash recently used bedding and towels in hot water, or run in the dryer on high heat for 20 minutes.
- **Brushes & Combs:** Soak in hot water (at least 130°F / 54°C) for 10 minutes.

Medical Sources & References

- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) - Head Lice](#)
- [American Academy of Pediatrics \(AAP\) Clinical Report](#)
- [National Association of School Nurses \(NASN\)](#)