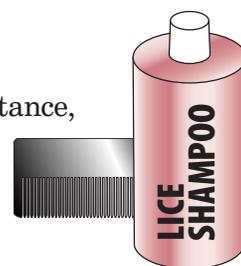


## Option A: Head Lice Shampoo & Cream Rinse

Special head lice shampoos and rinses are a safe and effective treatment. Due to possible resistance, the shampoo may not be as effective as the other methods. Approximate cost is \$11 per bottle. The shampoo or cream rinse kills the head lice on the head but may not kill the nits. The nits need to be removed from the hair using a special “nit” comb and by using your fingernails.



### STEPS TO FOLLOW

Do	Remember
1. <b>Check the heads</b> of all household members. Using a fine toothed lice comb, check the entire head, especially behind ears and back of neck. You are looking for live lice.	If one person in a house has head lice, there is a good chance that other household members have head lice too.
2. <b>Treat</b> infested household members at the same time. <b>Read and follow the directions on the head lice shampoo or cream rinse carefully.</b>	Unless you treat all infested household members, head lice can be passed on from one person to another when heads touch.
3. <b>Remove all dead lice and nits</b> using a nit comb or your fingers. Rinse nit comb or fingers in a sink or bowl of warm water and wipe dry after each stroke.	Metal and plastic nit combs are available at your local pharmacy. If the nit comb tugs the hair, try untangling the hair with a wide tooth comb first and then try the nit comb again.
3. <b>Wash</b> clothing worn in the past 2–3 days, bed sheets and pillowcases and place in <b>hot</b> cycle of the dryer <b>or</b> put the items in a sealed plastic bag for 10 days.	There is no reason to do a major clean up of the house to get rid of head lice. Only items that have been in direct contact with the affected person need to be washed, such as shirts, jackets, hats, combs, brushes and pillowcases.
4. <b>Treat a second time</b> 7–10 days after the first treatment. Repeat steps 2 and 3 above. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A third treatment is optional</li> </ul>	A second treatment will make sure that any head lice which hatch after the first treatment will be killed before they have a chance to lay any eggs. Two treatments and a follow-up check of the head with nit removal is the best way to make sure head lice are gone.

## OPTION B: WET COMBING

A non-chemical way to find and eliminate head lice.

**Remove the Head Lice:** Wet combing is based on the life cycle of head lice. This removes the live head lice from the head. Combing treatments are done every 3–4 days over a two-week period. This breaks the life cycle of head lice by removing them before they are fully grown and able to lay more eggs. This option is low cost and safe but takes time. Approximate cost for nit comb is \$4, and for conditioner is \$5 per bottle.

### STEPS TO FOLLOW

Do	Remember
1. <b>Wash</b> hair with normal shampoo and rinse.	Note: On average, a wet combing session takes about ½ hour per person.
2. <b>Apply</b> at least ½ cup of normal conditioner (any brand) to cover and wet all of the hair. Do not rinse out the conditioner.	Untangle hair with a regular wide tooth comb. Wet conditioner will stop the lice from moving around as quickly.
3. <b>Comb</b> sections of hair using a fine toothed lice comb. Divide hair into small sections. Firmly draw the comb from the scalp to the end of the hair. After each stroke, check the comb for lice. Rinse the comb in a sink or bowl of warm water, and wipe dry. Continue section by section until the entire head is done. Make sure hair stays wet with conditioner during combing.	Metal or plastic nit combs are available at your local pharmacy. If the comb tugs the hair, use a wide toothed comb first and more conditioner, then try the nit comb again.
4. <b>Rinse hair.</b> Leave hair dripping wet. Repeat Step 3 combing without conditioner, until no lice are found.	Check the comb and your fingernails for head lice (you do not want to put any lice back in the hair).
5. <b>Wash</b> clothing worn in the past 2–3 days, bed sheets and pillowcases and place in <b>hot</b> cycle of the dryer <b>or</b> put the items in a sealed plastic bag for 10 days.	There is no reason to do a major clean up of the house to get rid of head lice. Only items that have been in direct contact with the affected person need to be washed, such as shirts, jackets, hats, combs, brushes and pillowcases.
6. <b>Repeat</b> Steps 1–4 every three or four days for two weeks.	Follow the schedule below.

### DAYS TO WET COMB

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14

## OPTION C: HEAD LICE SPRAY

Special head lice spray is used because it has been tested and deemed a safe and effective treatment. Head lice spray successfully kills both head lice and nits (eggs). Approximate cost is \$40 per bottle.



### Kill the Head Lice and Nits

This option involves using two treatments 8–10 days apart with a special head lice spray (e.g. NYDA®). The spray works by suffocating and killing the head lice and the nits (eggs).

## STEPS TO FOLLOW

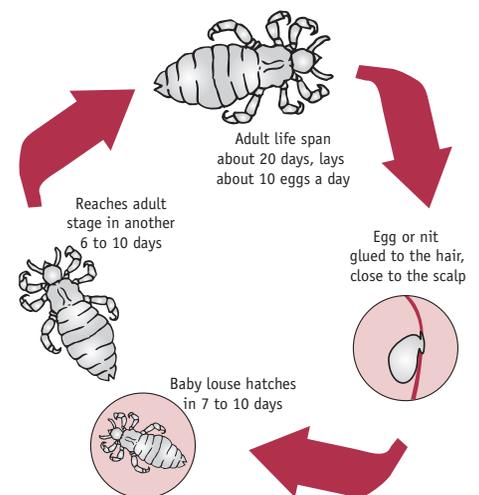
### Do

1. **Check the heads** of all household members. Using a fine toothed lice comb, check the entire head, especially behind ears and back of neck. You are looking for live lice.
2. **Treat** infested household members at the same time. **Read and follow the directions on the head lice spray carefully.**
3. **Wash** clothing worn in the past 2–3 days, bed sheets and pillowcases and place in **hot** cycle of the dryer **or** put the items in a sealed plastic bag for 10 days.
4. **Treat a second time** 8–10 days after the first treatment. Repeat step 2.

## HEAD LICE FACTS

- Anyone who has hair can get head lice. Head lice are not caused by being dirty.
- Head lice are very common in school aged children.
- Head lice do not spread illness or disease.
- Head lice are tiny insects about the size of a sesame seed and live only on the human head. They can vary in colour from tan, brown or gray.
- Head lice do not jump, fly or swim.
- Head lice can move quickly on dry hair making them hard to see.
- You can get head lice by touching heads with someone who has head lice, or by sharing combs, brushes, hats, headsets or helmets.
- Head lice bites can be uncomfortable and make the scalp itchy.
- Adult head lice lay about 10 eggs (called nits) every day. These nits are stuck to the hair near the scalp. After the head lice hatch, the empty shell of the nit stays stuck to the hair.
- You can find lice anywhere on the head. Look behind the ears and the back of the neck.
- You cannot get rid of lice with a hair brush or with a hair dryer.
- The best way to find head lice is by using a fine toothed lice comb on hair that is dry, wet or wet with conditioner.
- Only treat when you find a live louse on the head.

### Louse Life Cycle



Pictures enlarged. Adult louse only the size of sesame seed.

Contact your local Public Health Nurse if you have any questions.

Ask a pharmacist about the head lice shampoo, head lice cream rinse, or head lice spray options.

Other information are available at your local Community Health Office/Centre or online at <http://vch.eduhealth.ca>

For more information, contact:  
A public health nurse at  
Vancouver Coastal Health  
[www.vch.ca](http://www.vch.ca)

For more copies, go online at <http://vch.eduhealth.ca> or email [phem@vch.ca](mailto:phem@vch.ca) and quote Catalogue No. **FG.650.G48**  
© Vancouver Coastal Health, May 2016

The information in this document is intended solely for the person to whom it was given by the health care team.  
[www.vch.ca](http://www.vch.ca)