

Common Questions about Lice

Here are some common questions about lice. Hope this helps answer any of your questions. If not, call me.

1) Can a child get head lice from furniture or sharing a hat?

Head lice cannot survive longer than 6-20 hours without a host. They are rarely if ever transmitted via furniture but may be through brushes, pillows, towels or hats, if shared immediately. Main transmission remains head-to-head contact. Never disallow helmet use because of lice. It is unnecessary to scour the house or spray insecticides.

Vacuuming furniture and car seats is adequate. Hot water washing of pajamas, bed sheets, and towels within 2 days of treatment is a good thing. Soak brushes and combs in alcohol or a solution of dish detergent and hot water for 1 hour (Dawn works well)

2) Can head lice develop resistance to therapy?

Resistance to certain therapies may have always existed. Treatment failures stem from using treatments improperly or from reinfestation. Resistance to one class of therapy (ex. *pyrethrins* such as A-200 or RID) is often associated with sensitivity to another class of therapy (ex. *Permethrins* such as Nix)

Common mistakes when applying therapy are not reading or following the directions on the label. 1) Apply permethrin to damp, towel-dried hair-NOT wet (this will dilute the pediculocide) 2) Apply them a few drips at a time, directly on the scalp, section by section (more like hair color instead of a regular shampoo) Be certain scalp and roots are saturated. Extra bottles of pediculocide may be needed for very thick or curly hair. Time the treatments only AFTER solution has been applied to ALL areas. All affected house members must be checked and treated.

Be sure of diagnosis. Of people who think they have head lice, 42% do not. Teachers' correctly diagnose current or past infestation **85%** of time, but only half are actually active cases. Of all nurse-diagnosed head lice cases, only **32%** are active infestations. Of all physician-diagnosed cases, only **12%** are active infestations.

3) Dispel common myths. Head lice is not a result of poor hygiene or dirty living conditions. Lice can not jump from person to person. They do not carry disease, breed in furniture or prefer long hair.