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Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Nit Removal

For proper nit removal:

1. Work under a good light, such as the natural sunlight from sitting by a window or going outdoors. A strong lamp can also be used. If eyesight is a problem, have a magnifying glass on hand. Nits (lice eggs) are always oval-shaped, usually grayish-white although they can vary in color. Nits are generally laid close to the scalp but can be found anywhere on the hair shaft. Unlike dandruff, which can be removed easily, nits are attached firmly to the hair shaft.
2. Use a grooming comb or hairbrush to remove tangles.
3. Divide the hair in sections and fasten off the hair that is not being worked.
4. Using a nit removal comb (use only one comb per person), go through the section of hair from the scalp to the end of the hair. Use a paper towel to remove any lice, nits or debris from the comb as needed. (If debris builds up, use an old toothbrush to clean the comb.)
5. Look carefully through that same section of hair for attached nits (lice eggs). Also keep looking for live lice. They can be removed with Scotch tape or tweezers.
6. If the lice comb does not remove the nits, then use your fingernails and pull nit down the length of the hair to remove or use safety scissors to snip the individual hair strands with attached nits.
7. Go on to the next section of hair until all sections have been completed.
8. Soak comb in hot water (150 degrees) for 10 minutes or in lice medication for one hour.
9. As you remove nits and live lice place them in a trash bag and dispose of the trash bag out of the home when done going through hair.

Remember:

Even under the best of conditions, a few nits may be missed. Check the infested person every day for at least two weeks and regularly thereafter and remove any nits or lice found. Seeing a nit or two for the next few days does not necessarily mean reinfestation. Being consistent about manual removal will help.

If additional nits (at least 3-5 per day) are discovered, these signal that live lice may still be on the head. Another thorough manual search is recommended at that time and retreatment following the above steps may be needed.