

# HEAD LICE

## **What is head lice?**

Head lice are small insects about 1/8 inch long. They are easily transmitted from person to person by close contact. In addition, head lice can be transmitted by sharing of combs, hats or towels.

## **General Treatment Instructions:**

A single treatment with one of the shampoos or crème rinses mentioned below is sufficient to eliminate head lice infestation in a large majority of cases. However, treatment should be repeated in 7 to 10 days if living lice are still seen or if nits are seen within ½ inch of the scalp. Any nits observed on hair more than ½ inch away from the scalp are old and dead and should not prompt re-treatment.

Even after treatment, dead lice and nits (eggs) will remain on the scalp until removed by use of a fine-toothed comb or tweezers.

Combs and brushes should be soaked in an anti-lice shampoos or in 2% Lysol for one hour or heated in very hot water for 5 to 10 minutes. Hats, towels, and pillow cases should be washed or put in a sealed plastic bag for one month.

Others persons with close contact to the patient should also be treated.

## **Treatments:**

Use the treatment specified by your doctor.

## **Cream Rinse:**

Permethrin 1% (Nix) is available only by prescription. First wash hair with regular shampoo, rinse with water and towel dry. Then apply a sufficient volume of Nix to saturate the hair and scalp (especially behind the ears and on the nape of the neck). Nix should remain on the hair for 10 minutes before being rinsed off with water. Nits (eggs) should be removed with a fine-toothed comb or tweezers. Nix may cause a temporary increase in itching or burning in a small percentage of patients.

## **Shampoos:**

Kwell (prescription required) and RID, A-200, Pronto, and R&C (prescription not required) are applied to dry hair (approximately 1 oz for short and 2 oz for long). Work thoroughly into the hair and allow to soak for about 5 minutes. Add small quantities of water until a good lather forms. Then rinse thoroughly and towel dry. Nits should be removed using a nit comb or tweezers.