

To deal with live lice:

Purchase 1 bottle of Pantene Conditioner or any other inexpensive thick conditioner. For long hair you should use almost the whole bottle, shorter hair less.

Purchase a good quality lice comb... unfortunately chances are you'll use it more than once.

Sit down with child on a lower chair or stool. Have a roll of paper towel, conditioner, lice comb, clips (if hair is long), comb or chopstick to part hair, dye brush or flat paint brush to spread the conditioner.

Working in small sections (from part to ear, other side and then the back) part hair, spread a liberal amount of conditioner on scalp and brush down the length of the hair with flat brush, part next section (they should be less than ¼ " apart) and repeat. Take whole section when complete twist and clip up (if hair is long) move onto the next section. When all hair is saturated (this is used to partially slow the live lice down and/or smother them so they die) let conditioner sit for 20 minutes.

When time is up, again working in sections, take one section down and start combing with lice comb, removing bulk of conditioner and live slow lice, wipe off conditioner and lice on paper towel and repeat. If hair is thick you should work in 1 inch sections so you can really get all the hair through the thin tines of the lice comb. When all hair has been brushed through rinse off conditioner... extra bonus, no chemical smell and smooth soft hair.

I found this usually works the first time and I move onto nit picking after or I give the poor kid a break and nit pick the next day but you can repeat the treatment if needed.

To deal with nits:

Combing and medicating is where most people leave it and why reinfestation is so common. **I don't consider a kid totally nit free until you nit pick 3 times without finding a nit.** They are small and easy to miss... if you miss one you will be back doing this all over again in a couple weeks. You can also gauge the length of infestation on how far off the scalp you find the nits. White nits are lice that have already hatched the darker ones are the ones waiting to hatch.

Get a good strong light. I use a bendable clip on light. Get a bit of scotch tape or preferably packing tape. Take around a 5" section and loop in around onto itself (like you would to put it on a poster to hang) place tape on a surface close to where you are working (this is where you will place the nits you find). Have child sit at table or counter and rest their head on a folded towel. Using a comb or chopstick, or pencil... once again working in sections, one side from ear up to part, next side and the back. Lice usually lay more in one area than others and each kid is different, usual spots are behind/over the ears, the base of the neck, crown of the head or forehead. If you can figure out which area spend more time in those areas. Part hair in VERY small sections, looking for nits (you can tell the difference between nits and dandruff because dandruff blows away and nit's don't move). When you find a nit separate the hair shaft and using your nails drag the nit up the hair shaft and stick it to your tape. You should see a little dot on the tape..if not look again it could still be on the hair shaft, they are really stuck tight on the hair shaft and need to be scraped off. It's gross but kids find it interesting to look at the tape

at the end to see what all that work was for. Work your way through the hair. When done place another piece of tape over the nits stuck to the original tape (better safe than sorry) and throw in the trash. **A good thorough nit picking should take around an hour and could take up to two hours depending on the length, thickness and amount of nits on the hair.** Once again, time spent here is the difference between being done and having the lice re-infest weeks later.

I find that the chemical treatments don't work and give people a false sense of security. After the conditioner treatment and first nit pick but before the child is deemed free and clear I put their pillow, case and all, in the dryer for 20 minutes on high heat as a precaution. Heat is what kills the live louse. I place all brushes and combs in the dishwasher on hot, or you can soak in boiling water.

Are you itching yet? Can you feel them crawling on you? Well rest assured if you feel them crawling you're OK because when you have them you can't feel them moving around, so you're fine! In my ten years of picking nits and treating kids I have never gotten them myself.