



Household Cleaning for Head Lice

Doing some household cleaning can help prevent the spread of head lice. If head lice fall off a head, they can only live for 24-48 hours. ROUTINE house cleaning, along with cleaning clothing worn by the person with head lice, is sufficient. Only items that have been in contact with the head of the infested person **in the 48 hours** before treatment need to be cleaned.

These are suggestions for things to clean in the house to help get rid of head lice. These steps should be done on the same day of treatment or lice may continue to be a problem.

- ❖ **Special cleaners are NOT required OR recommended** for removing head lice. It is not necessary to use bleach, pesticides, insecticides, fogs or “bug bombs” in the removal of head lice, and these products can be toxic if inhaled or absorbed through the skin.
- ❖ **CLEAN:** (Remember... Only items that have been in contact with the head of the infested person in the 48 hours before treatment should be considered for cleaning.)
 - ✓ Combs, brushes and hair accessories. Soak in hot water for 10 minutes, or soak in lice-killing shampoo for one hour.
 - ✓ Sheets, pillow cases, blankets, mattress pads, and bedspreads. Wash and dry at hot settings. Regular detergent is fine, no need to use bleach.
 - ✓ Pillows and non-machine washable bedding: Put in the dryer on a hot setting for 30 minutes. (OR- hang in direct sun for 6-8 hours; OR seal in a plastic bag for 14 days)
 - ✓ Stuffed animals/toys with hair or fur: Wash and Dry on hot cycle (OR: seal in plastic bags for 14 days)
 - ✓ Clothing, jacket, sweaters, hat, scarves: Wash and dry on hot cycle
- ❖ **VACUUM:**
 - ✓ All mattresses. Wipe down waterbed mattresses with damp cloth. Buying a new mattress is NOT necessary or recommended.
 - ✓ Any cloth furniture, throw pillows and bean bag chairs.
 - ✓ Carpets.
 - ✓ Upholstered seats in your car (including car seats) and car carpets
 - ✓ Throw vacuum bag away outside in sealed garbage bag when done.
- ❖ Notify all people who have recently been in contact with any members of your family who have head lice so that they can check their family members. This step is important to avoid the spread of head lice.