

# WET COMBING

## Detect & Remove Head Lice

### What is WET COMBING?

A way to find and remove head lice by carefully combing through wet hair soaked with conditioner, using a fine-tooth comb.

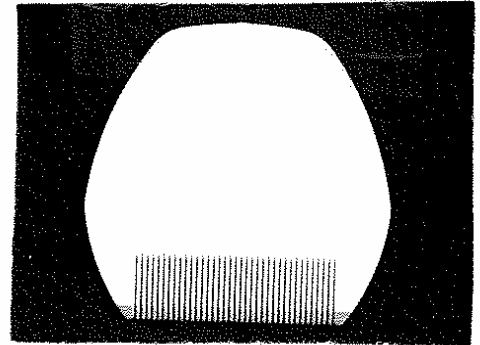
### Why do WET COMBING?

- Saves money, no harmful chemicals, environmentally friendly.
- Makes finding lice easier because they remain still when wet.
- Puts an END to your head lice problems – Using wet combing in a scheduled way (see page 2), removes lice before they are mature enough to lay eggs.

### The WET COMBING method:

You need - regular shampoo (*not 2 in 1*)

- regular conditioner
- a wide-tooth comb
- \* Important - a plastic head lice comb or other comb, (like a pet flea comb), with very small spaces between the teeth
- a large towel
- paper towels and garbage bag



1. Wash hair with the shampoo. Rinse. Leave hair dripping wet.
2. Drape the towel around child's shoulders.
3. Using lots of conditioner, soak hair thoroughly down to the scalp. Leave conditioner in the hair.
4. Sit the child in a location with good lighting, by a sink if possible.
5. Untangle and straighten hair using the wide-tooth comb.



6.
  - a) Switch to the head lice or fine-tooth comb.
  - b) Work with small sections of hair. Place the teeth of the lice comb at the roots of the hair, touching the scalp.
  - c) Comb through each section of hair from roots to ends, several times.
  - d) Pay special attention when combing around the ears and back of the neck.
  - e) Check the comb for lice (baby to adult size), after each stroke, and remove them by wiping the comb on paper towels or rinsing under the tap. This is what you are looking for:



• • • • • (life size)

- f) Continue until you have combed the whole head and no more lice are found. Keep hair wet.
7. Rinse out the conditioner, and leave the hair dripping wet. Repeat steps 5 & 6 to find any lice you might have missed.

WET COMBING-How often?

- Wet combing to remove all lice and break the lifecycle can be done as often as every two days for 2 weeks, but the following pattern has proven very successful:  
Repeat the steps on page 1 for a total of **4** times in **2** weeks, wet combing every **4<sup>th</sup>** day
- Use the calendar below to keep track of the wet combing days, by inserting the date in the boxes.

Found lice - Wet Combing	1	2	3	Wet Combing <b>4</b>	1	2
3	Wet Combing <b>4</b>	1	2	3	Wet Combing <b>4</b>	

If done correctly, all the live head lice should be removed in the first session you do wet combing. Any live eggs still present on the hair will hatch in 7-10 days and baby lice do not leave the head. You will remove those baby lice in the next combing sessions, so make sure you continue wet combing for the full 2 weeks. (Many people like to work at removing as many eggs as possible so there will be fewer lice hatching).

**If you see large lice** any time after the first wet combing session, it is likely that head lice have travelled from someone else. They may have also had a chance to lay eggs. So, add 3 more sessions of wet combing every 4<sup>th</sup> day.

If you choose to use a head lice treatment product, it is still important to do wet combing 5 days after treatment and again 12 days after treatment to be sure all lice are gone.

Even when you think you are rid of the head lice, it is wise to continue wet combing as part of your weekly routine.

Follow-up Advice

Check everyone living in your home and treat everyone who has head lice the same day so lice are not passed back and forth. Caregivers should do the wet combing on themselves after helping the rest of the family.

Inform anyone who could have been in head to head contact with the child who had lice so they can do a head lice check.

The presence of nits (empty harmless egg shells which remain glued to the hair) can be embarrassing for a child, so manually remove them.

Your usual thorough vacuuming, and washing clothes and towels are important, but there is no need for sprays. Lice infest people not homes!

For more information call Niagara Region Public Health – School Health Elementary Program at 905-688-8248 or 1-888-505-6074 ext. 7379



Pictures courtesy of  
Community Hygiene Concern  
Bug Buster Kit Combs