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Menopause, Andropause And Other Hormone Imbalances
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Head Lice

By Rexanne Mancini

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I laugh I the face of chaos ... better to laugh about it than fall to your knees, weeping from sheer panic and horror if and when your child brings head lice, this dreaded but very common liability of childhood, into your home.

Yes, my kids have had head lice. No, they are not dirty or poorly groomed, nor do they hang out with dirty kids. How these perfectly awful little stinkers found their way into our home was on my older daughter's head, courtesy of one of her classmates. As soon as we managed to eradicate the first offense, my younger daughter started scratching her bean, thank you. This went on for six gruesome weeks, passing from one kid to the other. I ran more than 90 loads of laundry, destroying most of our better linens, clothes and comforters by boiling them in the hottest water the washing machine could muster. We sprayed every inch of our home with pediculicide. We washed our hair daily with lice-killing shampoo until we had blisters from the strong poisons needed to try to kill the vermin and their precious eggs. We pulled nits from our daughter's long hair for hours at a time, quarantined every stuffed animal and doll with hair for weeks ... all to no avail.

My children were traumatized, I was reduced to a crying, hysterical bug-fearing heap and our 19-year-old cat was tortured by twice-weekly flea baths that he appreciated about as much as a bowl of steamed rice.

I'm sorry ... I wish I had an answer, a cure ... some hope to offer. I don't.

After week six of lice-induced panic, we finally set off flea bombs in every room of the house, then fled to my mother's for two hours while the canisters sprayed poison over every inch of our furniture and belongings. Warily, we stepped back into our home where we were greeted by a coat of greasy goop to wipe off every square inch of exposed possessions. I then called my daughter's school, making it very clear that she would not be returning until I was guaranteed the outbreak was completely eliminated from her classroom. She was home for two more weeks before the school nurse assured me she had sent every child with nits home to live the torture we had. We had finally managed to eradicate the plague. This was more than three years ago ... can you tell it's still as fresh a trauma in

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my heart and soul as it was then? Believe it. It is.

I have scoured the Internet and read every article I could find about head lice. I want to be armed and prepared for battle if this horror ever cloaks our lives again. No such luck ... everyone out there is as resigned to the meek inheriting our heads as I am not prepared to be. There are a few ideas floating around that I would have tried had I known about them.

If you have boys, you can get away with shaving their heads. Yes, this sounds gruesome but you'll be forever grateful I gave you permission to goof up your son's hair if he does manage to bring holocaust into your home. If you have daughters, I'm sorry. My heart goes out to you. You can't really shave a girl's head in this day and age, although a family friend who is a doctor from Italy recommended we do just that. I giggled, thinking he was sooo from the old school ... I giggle no more! But we didn't shave

our daughters' heads. We suffered untold hell instead.

Apparently, lice have become immune to the various pediculicide treatments on the market. There are quite a few brands of pediculicide shampoo, conditioner and room spray, all with weakening power against the bolstered immune system lice have developed. I've heard that tea tree oil, olive oil and rosemary oil are helpful in nixing the little buggers. Hairspray and hair coloring are also good deterrents. Unless you're ready to dye and spray your kid's heads, this isn't an option but you could schedule a dye job early if you color your own hair. Ya know what? I'd color my daughter's hair. What's worse? Bathing their little heads in surefire poison? How bad could a bottle of hair dye be compared to insecticide? If it works, count your blessing and wait for it to grow out.

One recommendation from my children's school is to wash their hair vigorously as soon as they come home if there is an outbreak of lice in their classroom. Sounds reasonable. If they did manage to bring home an unwelcome guest, washing their hair and scalp immediately might remove the louse before it has a chance to lay eggs.

By all means, be informed. If you never have this massive nightmare visit your home, you're ten steps ahead in the life of a parent. If you've lived it, you're probably shuddering at the thought of another go-around. If you have head lice breeding in your home as you read this, my heart goes out to you. Know that you have millions of understanding parents who pity you, however the parents of your child's classmates will positively hate you if you knowingly send your kid to school with head lice. Don't even think about it ...

Rexanne Mancini is the mother of two daughters. She maintains an extensive yet informal parenting and family web site, Rexanne.com - <http://www.rexanne.com> –Visit her site for good advice, award-winning Internet holiday pages and some humor to help you cope. Subscribe to her free newsletter, Rexanne's Web Review, for a monthly dose of Rexanne: <http://www.rexanne.com/rwr-archives.html>

Head Lice Treatment Tips

Head Lice

By Catherine Olivia

There was some news last week from the Center for Disease Control that some head lice are becoming harder to treat. They have apparently done an evolutionary type of "change" and some seem to be adapting to specific shampoos used to eradicate them. This could be a parents worst nightmare. Take heart however, pyrethrin shampoos are still the best way to get rid of head lice.

Head lice seem to be very hardy bugs and have been around for thousands of years. They are very contagious if your child comes into direct contact with the head of someone who is infected. You can also come into contact with head lice by sharing combs and brushes, or hats. Head lice can also be picked up from sharing pillows and from some upholstered furniture. It is a good idea to keep any area where the person infected with head lice may sit vacuumed before, during, and after the treatment process.

If your child comes into contact with head lice at home it is very important that you notify his/her school and any playmates immediately. If your child is under two years of age it is best to contact your pediatrician for head lice treatment advice as most pyrethrin shampoos are generally not recommended for children under the age of two.

Using a shampoo formulated to specifically kill head lice is still the most effective method of eradication. Make sure that you follow the directions exactly. Pay close attention to the thickness and length of the hair of the infected individual. You may need to use more shampoo to ensure proper coverage. As with treating other types of infestations, such as fleas, head lice sometimes need to be treated twice. Head lice shampoos have some difficulty penetrating the head lice eggs which can hatch generally a week to ten days after the first treatment. A second shampoo treatment usually kills all the freshly hatched head lice. Don't be upset, many times a second head lice treatment is necessary. The use of the nit comb is also an important part of treatment. The nit comb is specifically designed with small very close teeth. This nit comb will help you to comb out all killed and dying head lice from the scalp/hair which is the best way to keep an eye on the progress you are making.

Clothing and bedding will also need to be washed on a daily basis during treatment. Use hot water to wash clothing. Any hat or scarf or clothing item that came into contact with the head lice infested individual will need to be dry cleaned if you can't wash them.

To learn more about Head Lice please visit



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