

# the lice survival guide

## □ Metal nit comb

Professional nitpicker Abigail Rosenfeld recommends the Nisska, \$24, at [exit15.com/nisska-combs-p-1581.html](http://exit15.com/nisska-combs-p-1581.html). Her second choice is the LiceMeister, \$10, at [headlice.org/catalog](http://headlice.org/catalog).

## □ Nontoxic “shampoos”

Get Licefreee and other nontoxic lice treatments at drugstores for around \$20.

## □ Conditioner

Get one that’s thick and white, such as Pantene Pro-V Conditioner, Smooth & Sleek, \$8.

## □ Baking soda

Rosenfeld mixes this with the conditioner to help strip out the nits.

## □ Natural or bright light

Bathrooms typically have the best light but additional light sources can be useful.

## □ Large trash bags

Get lots of these to hold contaminated clothing and bedding.

## □ White paper towels

To catch—and see—what you comb out. It’s both disgusting and satisfying.

## □ Magnifying glass or loupe

Particularly useful if you don’t have sharp eyes.

## The Step-By-Step Guide to Combing Out Lice

You can kill the lice with a nontoxic “shampoo” first, or you can skip that step. But to fully get rid of lice, you have to comb. Do this over the bathroom sink or somewhere else with lots of light and a place to catch the critters.

1. Pour a big gob of conditioner mixed with baking soda onto the child’s hair.
2. Using a metal nit comb and making sure you start all the way down at the scalp, comb out the hair in sections about the width of the comb, up and away from the head.
3. Keep wiping the comb on a white paper towel so you can see what you’re removing and how you’re progressing. Mature lice are about the size of sesame seeds. Nits (eggs) and nymphs (babies) are tiny, like grains of sand. Keep combing, adding conditioner as needed, until your paper towel looks clean.
4. Rinse hair.
5. Change the shirt your child was wearing during the combing. Wash all recently worn clothes, coats, and hats. Wash the child’s pillow, bedding, and any stuffed animals that may have come in contact with the head. Cover fabric seats, especially car seats. Isolate pillows, stuffed animals, etc., that you’d rather not wash into plastic trash bags, tightly tied, for two weeks. (You can leave these bags in your living spaces, as the lice will not be able to escape.) Alternately, you can put such items in the freezer for a couple of days, or outside if the weather is below freezing.
6. Repeat a thorough combing, using the nit comb and conditioner mixture, every other day for at least a week. Check to make sure all nits are gone, repeating the comb-out as necessary.
7. Don’t forget to keep checking other family members’ heads for lice!