

# Lice Treatments

By Donna Powers RCSHom, CCH, RSHom (NA)



There are a number of remedies that homeopaths can use to treat head lice in adults or children, whether a one time situation or chronic infestations. Rather than a one remedy fits all, homeopaths can individualize, which means that homeopathy can offer a safe, non-toxic alternative to the poisonous over the counter treatments by taking into account who the person is with head lice.

One person might be full of despair with the itching, very chilly (**Psorinum**) and yet another person might be fearful that they have a terrible disease and feel better in the open air (**Sabadilla**).

**Staphysagria** can be thought of as well, especially if your child/adult seems offended or insulted by the idea of having head lice.

**Pediculus** is the homeopathic remedy made from head lice. Symptoms may include:

- Laughing
- Sadness/melancholy/anger without cause
- Sudden changes in mood
- Skin symptoms of itching, prickling, irritability (physically and mentally)
- Hair falling out

The patient does not need to have all these symptoms, but whatever his/her symptoms are do need to be included in the remedy. With a case of head lice, it is best to consult with a homeopath for the remedy that best fits the child and/or adult.

## Essential Oil Shampoo and Rinse

You may want to use this even if your child does not have lice. But if one child has it, you'll want to give everyone the "treatment"!

Just a reminder...your best results will be homeopathic treatment and some of the other suggestions in the handout. With essential oils though, it is possible to cancel out a homeopathic remedy, so use the oils well away from the time when a homeopathic remedy is given.

## ESSENTIAL OIL TREATMENTS

Alcohol based to kill 100% adults and eggs.

100 ml (about ½ cup) of 40% alcohol (vodka or grain alcohol)

20 drops Oregano or Aniseed or Cinnamon Leaf (not the stick) Essential Oil

Shake before using or use 10 drops of Jojoba oil to increase solubility.

Rub into scalp and leave on overnight, then wash off in the morning with shampoo.

Alcohol free to kill 100% adults and eggs.

100 ml (about ½ cup) Water (I'd use distilled or Reverse Osmosis)

20 drops Aniseed essential oil (smells like licorice)

Shake before using or use 10 drops of Jojoba oil to increase solubility.

Rub into scalp and leave on overnight, then wash off in the morning with shampoo.

Alcohol free to kill 100% adults and 99.3% eggs.

100 Mil (about ½ cup) Water (I'd use distilled or Reverse Osmosis)

20 drops Oregano essential oil

Shake before using or use 10 drops of Jojoba oil to increase solubility.

Rub into scalp and leave on overnight, then wash off in the morning with shampoo.

Oil based to kill 100% eggs and adults.

100 ml (about ½ cup) Jojoba oil or other oil carrier

20 drops Aniseed Essential Oil

Rub into scalp and leave on overnight, then wash off in the morning with shampoo.

## SHAMPOO

Adapted from [this website](#).

For normal hair, or as a base to add your own scents, use:

1/4 cup distilled water

1/4 cup liquid Castile Soap - I use unscented, but you can choose your favorite

1/2 teaspoon jojoba, grapeseed, or other light vegetable oil

20 drops Aniseed or Oregano or Cinnamon Leaf Essential Oil

Mix together all the ingredients. Store in a bottle. Shake before use.

This mixture isn't as thick as commercial shampoos - you'll need to just tilt the bottle over your head. Or store the shampoo in a spray bottle and it's much easier to use.

## RINSE

Adapted from [this website](#).

2 drops Same Essential Oil that you used in the overnight treatment

50 ml (1/4 cup) water

50 ml (1/4 cup) vinegar

After shampooing/rinsing with clear water, do a final rinse with the EO/vinegar/water mixture.

Repeat the whole process 1 week later.

---

The Essential Oils Treatment recipes came from the research of [Lowana Veal](#) and was first published in *Complementary Therapies in Nursing & Midwifery* (1996) 2: 97-101 and *The Aromatherapist* (1996), 3(3) 3: 4-13. I would love to hear your feedback!

*Not all the oils were tested at the same time. Oregano had 100% mortality with both eggs and adults when dissolved in alcohol, and so did aniseed and cinnamon leaf, though the control mortality for the egg results in the last two oils was abnormally high. Red thyme had 84% mortality with adults and 92% with eggs, though it was in the same batch as aniseed and cinnamon so the egg results may not be accurate. Tea tree had 93% adult mortality and 83% egg mortality. A rinse was used in all cases. The rinse by itself is ineffective.*

*I also tested some of the oils in water rather than alcohol, and found that aniseed still killed 100% of the adults and eggs, and oregano killed 99.3% of eggs and 100% of adults. Red thyme killed all the adults but only 51% of eggs; tea tree killed 94% of adults and 59% of eggs, and cinnamon leaf killed 86% of adults but only 26% of eggs.*

*I had to shake the mixtures each time because they weren't particularly soluble. It may be possible to use jojoba oil as a solvent, which will deal with the solubility problem. Jojoba oil is said to dissolve sebum, which means that the oils may penetrate the insect cuticle faster. Other carrier oils could also be tried, as the insect cuticle is generally soluble to lipids and lipid-soluble compounds. I also found that using olive oil overnight on lice eggs prevented*

*the majority of the eggs from developing, but it did not work so effectively with adult lice. Alcohol is known to increase the penetration rate of the cuticle.*

*So how should the oils be used? Based on my experiments, you could try the following: use a base of 40% alcohol (vodka would do, or grain alcohol), and add any of the effective essential oils (EO) mentioned above at a rate of 10 drops to 50 mls. Rub that into the scalp and leave on overnight then wash off in the morning with shampoo. Then put a rinse through the hair using 2 drops of the same EO/ EO mix that you used originally added to half a pint (100 ml) of 50:50 vinegar and water. Repeat the whole process a week later. If you don't want to use alcohol as the solvent, use either aniseed or oregano oils with water as a solvent. Jojoba oil or another carrier oil may also be worth trying, as mentioned earlier.*