

How To TREAT AND WHAT To Do At Home?

- Use a recommended headlice product. Always speak to a pharmacist about the product that is appropriate for you and your family. Follow directions specific to the product being used.
- Head lice products kill the head lice and many eggs.
**Remove nits with a nit comb or drag the nit down the hair shaft with your finger nails. Use a bright light so you can properly see the nits.
- Check for head lice daily, and remove any nits that are present. It is important that you take the time to do this. It is recommended to remove all nits as head lice products are not 100% effective.
- One treatment may not be enough, and a second treatment may be required 7 - 10 days later. Overuse of products can be hazardous.
- In order for treatment to be fully effective, you must properly clean your house. This includes:
- Wash all clothing and personal items (including hats, scarves, hair brushes, combs, towels, bedding, stuffed animals, etc.) in hot soapy water.
- Vacuum surfaces that have contact with heads, for example: sofas, seats of cars.
- Items that cannot be washed should be drycleaned or placed in an airtight plastic bag for two weeks.
- Clean frequently at the same time as treatments.



REMINDER

You should only use head lice treatment products if head lice are present.

There is no evidence that products such as tea tree oil or aromatherapy work to treat head lice.

At this time there are **NO treatments available to prevent head lice.**



FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Visit the Canadian Pediatric Society website at www.cps.ca
- Contact your local school
- Contact your local Public Health Nursing office
 - O'Leary.....(902) 859-8720
 - Tignish.....(902) 882-7366
 - Summerside.....(902) 888-8160
 - Kensington.....(902) 836-3863
 - Wellington.....(902) 854-7259
 - Charlottetown.....(902) 368-4530
 - Montague.....(902) 838-0762
 - Souris.....(902) 687-7049

REFERENCES

Toronto Public Health, 2013
Head lice fact sheet
Toronto.ca/health
CPS.ca

Caring for Kids

June 2015

So you have an itch?



Survival Guide for Parents

Preventing and Treating Head Lice

Health PEI
One Island Health System

15HPE06-41109

WHAT ARE HEAD LICE?

The head louse is an insect that lives and breeds on your head. Head lice feed themselves by biting your scalp and ingesting the blood. Head lice are common and treatable. There is no reason to panic. Simply follow the steps outlined in this brochure.



WHO CAN GET HEAD LICE?

Anyone!

Anyone who comes in direct head-to-head contact with an individual who has head lice can get head lice. Most cases are found in children ages 3 - 10 and their families.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- Itching of the head, particularly behind the ears, at the front of the scalp and the nape of the neck.
- Scabbing on the scalp
- Tickling sensation on the head, feels as if something is moving on the scalp.

HOW CAN I GET HEAD LICE?

- Direct head-to-head contact with someone who already has head lice.
- Head-to-head contact is most common during activities such as sleepovers, sports, and camp, etc.
- Sharing hair brushes, hats, clothing, bedding, stuffed animals, pillows or towels with someone who has head lice.



WHAT DOES HEAD LICE LOOK LIKE?

The insects are tiny, wingless, grayish brown in color, and move very quickly. They CANNOT jump or fly. There are three stages in the life cycle of head lice:

NITS are head lice eggs. They are difficult to see and can be confused with dandruff. The difference is that dandruff will move, nits will not. They are oval in shape and can vary in color (white to grayish brown). They take 7 - 10 days to hatch.

A NYMPH is a baby louse. It looks the same as an adult louse, but smaller. They grow to adults in approximately 7 days.

ADULT lice are about the size of a sesame seed, have 6 legs, and they can vary in color (tan, gray, or white). They can live on the human head for up to 30 days and can live on surfaces (clothing, bedding, furniture) for up to 48 hours.

If Your Child Has Head Lice...

- Stay calm, do not make your child feel guilty about head lice. It can happen to anyone.
- Contact the school, daycare, and any friends or family who have been in close contact.
- Begin treatment as outlined.
- Check all people within the household and treat if necessary.
- Continue to check regularly to avoid another outbreak.
- Avoid head-to-head contact, sharing of hats, scarves, hairbrushes and combs.
- Put long hair in braids or ponytails.

