

HEAD LICE

Guidelines for TCSA Schools

OCTOBER 2016

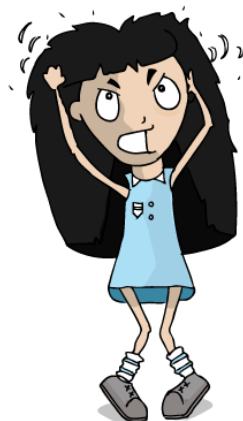
Original: October 2013

Background

Head lice is not a reportable disease. In fact, it is more appropriately defined as a social nuisance, not a health problem. Therefore, coordinated efforts between parents, teachers, schools and the community are necessary to control outbreaks of head lice.

Head lice is best dealt with when there is a strategy or plan of action. The aim is to control an infestation by prevention, early detection, prompt management, and effective education of teachers, parents, children and volunteers. Although this problem may not be eliminated entirely, it can be handled effectively to minimize the effect in the school community.

Therefore, this resource outlines roles and responsibilities, a school action plan, a set of template letters that may be used by school staff, and a fact sheet that will help dispel some commonly held myths about head lice.



DID YOU KNOW ...

The Canadian Pediatric Society states that “school exclusion due to the detection of the presence of head lice does not have sound medical rationale” (2012).

Roles and Responsibilities

Head lice control works best when everyone helps. Parents, schools and the Health Centre all have a part to play to control the ongoing problem.

Parent's Role

It is necessary for parents to assume the major responsibility for the identification and treatment of lice.

Parents should:

- Be aware of the signs and the symptoms of infestation.
- Be familiar with the technique for examining hair for lice and nits.
- Examine their children's head weekly for signs of infestation as part of routine hygiene or more often during an outbreak.
- Notify the school and others who have come into contact with the child who has lice.
- Be aware of the importance of efficient treatment and control measures in the home.
- Carry out treatment using an approved product (as per a nurse, pharmacist or doctor).
- Inform the school that treatment has been completed.

School's Role

Principals should:

- Discuss the roles and responsibilities of the school and the health center with the Nurse in Charge (NIC) for your community. Ensure supportive and open communication.
- Distribute head lice information to all families of students at the beginning of the school year and again when infestation occurs. The "Head Lice Information Sheet" can be distributed at parent information sessions or incorporated into a school newsletter or handbook, etc.
- Ensure at least one member of the school staff is trained in how to check for head lice. Advise all parents and guardians by phone (and with a follow-up letter) when their child is identified as having lice or has come into contact with other students with lice.
- Notify parents, other schools, and/or other childcare facilities as necessary when a child is found with nits or head lice (it is possible his / her siblings may also have head lice).

Teachers should:

- Consider being trained (by a public health nurse) to check for head lice.
- Actively promote and teach preventive measures for the control of head lice in the classroom.
- Report suspected cases to the principal.
- Assist in distributing literature to families.

Health Center's Role

As determined through conversation with the school principal and the nurse in charge.

- Health Center staff members may be available to assist in providing training and educational materials to schools, parents, and community agencies upon request.
- Health Center staff members may be able to help schools to implement head lice protocols.

A SCHOOL ACTION PLAN:

WHAT TO DO WHEN A STUDENT HAS HEAD LICE

The diagram below shows the recommended steps to take in the event a child is identified as having head lice. It is essential to handle the situation sensitively and minimize any embarrassment to the child.

Head lice is identified by teacher, parent, or screener



The child is permitted to stay at school until the end of the day, but close physical contact with others should be discouraged until he or she has been treated.



Send note / communication to the office promptly



Place a phone call to the appropriate persons (parents / guardians of affected child). Send home a letter and information sheet with the child at the end of the day as well.



Letter / info sheet sent to parents of children in classrooms where head lice has been identified. (Efforts should be made to avoid overreaction by parents and subsequent unnecessary treatment of children who do not have head lice. However, if head lice are found, all family and close contacts should be checked and treated if infested.)



When no new cases of head lice are found the principal should send home the "Follow-Up Notice to Parents about Head Lice". The principal can refer parents who are having problems with treatment or who want more information to call their local Health Center.



Return of the child to school is at the discretion of the principal ... who must confirm that proper treatment was given (most products now require a second treatment 7-10 days after the first however students may return to school after the first round of treatment).



Notice to Parents about Head Lice

Date

Dear Parent or Guardian:

Your child may have come in contact with someone who has head lice. To help control the spread of head lice, please read the attached **Head Lice Information Sheet** prepared by the Tlicho Community Services Agency and check your child's hair for lice or nits today.

Sincerely,

Name
Principal
School Name



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Name
Principal
School Name



Follow-Up Notice to Parents about Head Lice

Date

Dear Parent or Guardian:

We are pleased to report that the head lice situation is under control. To date we have no new cases. Your cooperation in checking your children's hair for head lice weekly is appreciated. If head lice are found, please notify the school or immediately. These actions are very important for the control of head lice. If you have any questions, please call the school or Health Center.

Thank you for your support,

Name

Principal

School Name



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HEAD LICE: A FACT SHEET



Head lice crawl from person to person by direct head to head contact. They do not spread disease and anyone can get them. They are more common in children as their heads frequently touch when they play together. Itching is the main complaint. Parents should check their children's hair *weekly* for head lice. Check more often if your child has close contact with someone who has head lice. **Do not send a child with head lice to a school or to a child care facility until he or she has had *the first* of the two required treatments.**

WHAT TO LOOK FOR:

Lice

- Small, flat, hard to see insects
- About the size of a sesame seed
- Greyish-brown in colour
- Crawling, unable to jump or fly

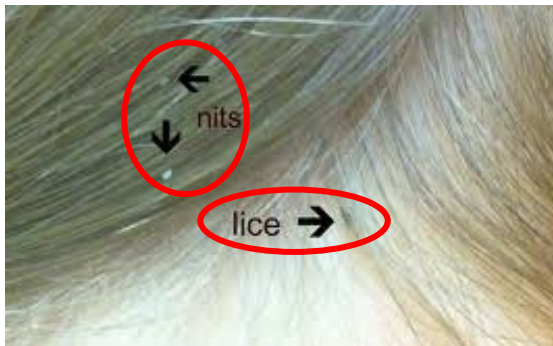


Eggs (Nits)

- On hair shafts very close to the scalp
- Size of a grain of sand
- Oval in shape
- Glued to the hair (they cannot be washed off with shampoo or flicked off like dandruff or sand)
- Brownish in colour when alive
- Hatch in about 7 days
- Nits found *more* than 1 cm from the scalp are dead or hatched and are whitish in colour

HOW TO GET RID OF HEAD LICE:

Check all close contacts – if one person in the family has head lice, it is possible that other family members will also have them. Tell your child's school, day-care, and play groups so that other parents can be notified to check their children's hair. An untreated source among close contacts is a common reason for getting head lice again. **It is important that all individuals who have head lice be treated at the same time.**



CONTACT YOUR HEALTH CENTER ABOUT TREATMENT IF ...

- you are allergic to any of the ingredients
- you are pregnant or breastfeeding
- treating children under two years of age
- treating someone with seizure disorders
- the skin of the scalp is broken or infected

WHERE TO LOOK:

Look for lice or bits close to the scalp, particularly around the ears and at the back of the neck. Use a bright light and a magnifying glass if available. Act quickly if you find them.

TALK TO YOUR PHARMACIST OR LOCAL NURSE:

Your pharmacist or local nurse can help you choose a head lice product. You do not need a prescription. Read the list of ingredients and

the directions **very carefully**. Nix, R&C, and Kwellada-P are proven effective when used as directed.



GIVE TWO TREATMENTS 7-10 DAYS APART.

The first treatment will kill head lice but not all of the eggs. Even with careful nit-picking some live eggs will be missed. These eggs can continue to hatch over the next week, which is why all products must be used again in 7-10 days. This will kill the newly hatched lice before they are able to move from head to head and reproduce. If you see live lice 48 hours after the second treatment, contact your health center.

NIT REMOVAL

Thorough nit removal is necessary after each treatment. Removing the nits after treatment makes it easier to see a new infestation and is an essential step to getting rid of the head lice. It may also be important for the child's appearance. Children may return to school or child care facility after the first treatment even if nits still remain in their hair.



Short sessions of nit removal over several days may be easier than one long session.

Work with small sections of the hair using a bright light. With a fine-toothed nit comb or your fingernails, pull the nits from the hair strands starting from the roots right down to the tips. Wipe the nits onto a tissue, place in a bag for disposal, and wash your hands and the comb with soap and water.

CLEANING PERSONAL ITEMS

Head lice and their nits do not survive long away from the warmth and humidity of the scalp. However, sharing hair brushes while undergoing treatment is discouraged. You should wash combs and brushes, headgear, bed linens and towels in *hot water*. Extra housecleaning and use of insecticide sprays are not needed.

ALTERNATIVE TREATMENTS

Ladibugs lice treatment products were developed by two nurses and a chemist out of the United States. These lice



prevention and elimination products are a chemical-free option to dealing with head lice and contain such all-natural ingredients as peppermint oil, tea tree oil, and eucalyptus leaf oil among others. For more information on this treatment option visit <http://www.ladibugsinc.com/our-story/>

Results head lice treatment contains an ingredient that dissolves the waxy shell of lice, causing water loss from their body. This eventually causes dehydration and they die. More information about this treatment option can be found at <http://www.getresultz.ca/>