



## Advice on Head Lice for Parents

### Parent Checklist

#### Treating family members:

- 1  Check all family members often (weekly) to identify signs of head lice as early as possible. Look for adult head lice, and nits (eggs) attached close to the scalp.
- 2  Treat everyone in the family who has head lice and nits. Treatment is available from a pharmacy, talk to a pharmacist before purchasing.
- 3  Remove head lice and nits from hair using your finger tips or head lice comb every day until there are no more nits present (natural light works best).
  - a. Separate hair into sections
  - b. Check each section of the head closely before moving on (remember to pay attention to the ears, forehead, and base of neck)
  - c. Dispose of head lice/nits carefully (eg. paper/plastic bag)

**Tip:** To make nit removal easier, try sitting your child in front of a TV program or movie.



#### Treating the home:

- 4  Wash all used clothes and bedding in hot water, or dry in a hot dryer.
- 5  Put items that cannot be washed in hot water in a plastic sealed bag for 2 weeks (eg. stuffed animals, pillows, backpacks, comforters, hats, etc.).
- 6  Put all combs, brushes and hair accessories in hot, soapy water (Tip: try filling a bathtub or sink with hot soapy water).
- 7  Vacuum chairs, couches and carpets that have been used within the last few days.
- 8  Vacuum all cloth surfaces and carpets in vehicles used within the last few days (including car seats or booster seats).
- 9  Report any new cases of head lice to your school, day care centres, or any after-school activities to avoid spreading it to your family and community.
- 10  Repeat treatment and checklist in 7-10 days. Any nits that were missed would have hatched, therefore, a second treatment is necessary.

→ **See flip side for frequently asked questions**

# Frequently Asked Questions by Parents

## How do I know my child may have head lice?

Common signs of head lice are:

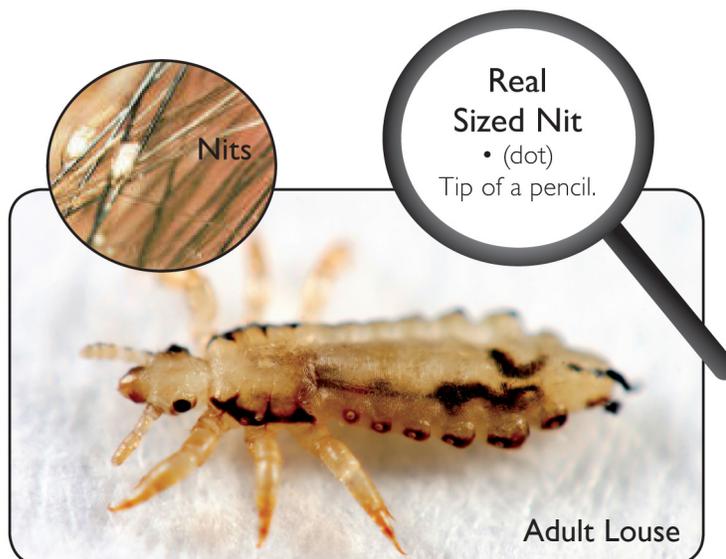
- Ticking feeling in the hair
- Frequent itching
- Sores on the scalp from scratching

## What do head lice and nits look like?

- When looking for head lice, you might see an adult louse but it is more common to see nits (eggs)
- Adult louse: tiny insect the size of a sesame seed that has six legs
- Nit: a cream coloured egg the size of a tip of a pencil that is usually oval and smooth; often confused with dandruff

## What's the difference between dandruff and a nit?

- Dandruff is easy to remove when touched
- Nits have to be pulled off with your fingernails



## Where on the head are lice and nits commonly found?

- Around the ears, forehead, and at the base of the neck

## What happens if my child has head lice?

- If your child is at school, the school will notify you and ask you to pick up your child
- You will have to treat your child before they can go back to school

## Do any household pets need to be treated?

- The only way you can get head lice is from another person
- Head lice/nits do not live on animals

### References:

Treating Head Lice Infestation. Centers for Disease Control, 2010. [http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dpd/parasites/lice/factsht\\_head\\_lice\\_treating.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dpd/parasites/lice/factsht_head_lice_treating.htm)

Canadian Paediatric Society (2008). [http://www.caringforkids.cps.ca/handouts/head\\_lice](http://www.caringforkids.cps.ca/handouts/head_lice)

## What are head lice and nits?

- Tiny insects the size of a sesame seed that live on the heads of humans and feed on their blood
- They cannot fly or jump, but they crawl very fast
- The adults lay eggs, which are called nits
- The nits are glued on the hair close to the scalp, and take about a week to hatch
- The only way you can get head lice is from another person

Updated August 2014

For more information, call the Haldimand-Norfolk Health Unit and speak to a Public Health Nurse.



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