

Info About HEAD LICE

Head lice are tiny insects that lay their eggs and live on the human head.

Lice do not cause disease or illness. However, their bites can make the scalp itchy and lead to infection if the skin is broken from too much scratching.

Lice do not jump or fly, but they are easily spread from person to person through head-to-head contact, or through sharing headgear such as combs, brushes, hats, or helmets.

Adult lice lay about 10 eggs (called nits) every day. Nits are stuck to the hair near the scalp and once they hatch, the shell stays stuck to the hair.

If lice are suspected, you need to check the whole head of all family members.

If lice are found, you need to treat for lice and remove all the nits to stop the life cycle.

LIFE CYCLE OF HEAD LICE

- Nits hatch 7 – 10 days after being laid, this small louse is called a nymph.
- It takes another 7 – 10 days for the nymph to grow into an adult louse.
- An adult louse will live for 30 days.
- Because of the life cycle of the nits and adult louse, you need to continue to check for nits until none are found for two straight weeks.

CHECKING FOR HEAD LICE

- Work in a well-lit room with the person sitting comfortably in a chair.
- Nits and lice can be anywhere on the head; be sure to check behind the ears and the nape of the neck.
- Divide the hair into sections and work through them slowly, parting the hair to clearly see the scalp.
- Keep in mind that you may not see any live lice, only nits.

REMOVING NITS

If nits or lice are found during your check, you need to start the removal and treatment process as soon as possible. Remember, if you miss one nit, the cycle can start all over again!

1. Using a fine-toothed comb or nit comb, follow the same process as checking for head lice (e.g., divide the hair into sections and slowly work through them, parting the hair to see the scalp).
2. Use the nit comb or your fingernail to pull the nit off the hair strand and place nits in a re-sealable plastic bag. Rinse the comb or your fingers in a bowl or sink of warm water between each stroke. Wipe dry.
3. Continue checking for, and removing, nits daily until no nits are found for two weeks. It may take an hour or more to thoroughly check a person's head and remove the nits. It's easy to miss them as they're so small, be sure to work slowly without skipping sections of the head.



Lice and nits are very small, work slowly and look carefully through the entire scalp when checking.

TREATING HEAD LICE

SHAMPOO OR WET COMBING

There are two common treatment options:

1. A special shampoo (available at the pharmacy without a prescription)
2. Wet combing (non-chemical)



HEAD LICE SHAMPOO

1. Use a head lice shampoo (also called pediculicide) as instructed on the directions.
2. Working through sections of the hair, remove all dead lice and nits using a lice comb or your fingernail. Rinse the comb or your fingers in a bowl or sink of warm water between each stroke. Wipe dry.
3. Repeat treatment in 7 -10 days. Check for live lice or nits following the second treatment. A third treatment is optional if no live lice are found.

**If you are pregnant or breastfeeding, or your child is under two years of age, has asthma or allergies, speak with your family health care provider or the pharmacist before using a chemical shampoo*



Cleaning Personal Items

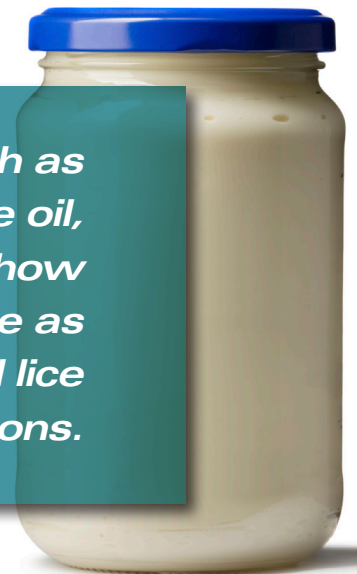
To help prevent the spread of lice, be sure to treat personal items such as clothing, hats, pillowcases, and bed sheets by washing them in hot water and drying them on a hot setting. Items which cannot be washed should be sealed in a plastic bag for two weeks to span the lifecycle of the louse. Remind children not to share hats, headbands, brushes, or combs to help prevent the spread of lice.

WET COMBING

1. Wash hair with regular shampoo and rinse.
2. Apply enough regular conditioner to cover all the hair* – do not rinse.
3. Divide hair into sections and slowly work through the entire head with a lice comb to remove lice and nits. After each stroke, rinse the comb in warm water and wipe it dry. Make sure the hair stays wet with conditioner during the combing.
4. Rinse hair and leave it dripping wet. Repeat step 3 without conditioner, until no lice are found.
5. Repeat Steps 1 – 4 every three or four days for two weeks.

**The conditioner will stop the lice from moving around as quickly, allowing you to remove them.*

Home remedies such as tea tree oil, olive oil, or mayonnaise show little to no evidence as effective head lice treatment options.



RESOURCES

Caring for Kids - www.caringforkids.cps.ca
Kids Health – www.kidshealth.org

For More Information
Windsor-Essex County Health Unit
1005 Ouellette Ave. Windsor, Ontario

519-258-2146 ext. 1555
www.wechu.org