



Form 316-2

Date:

Dear Parent or Guardian,

RE: Head Lice

Recently some cases of head lice have been found in the school/class your child attends. Parents of students that require treatment, have been contacted. In order to prevent future recurrences, we suggest that you observe your child and family.

We recommend that you inspect your child's head on a regular basis for lice and nits. Information, on the attached sheet, explains what to look for and how to treat if head lice are present.

Lice can be easily transmitted from one person to another. Remember, ANYONE can get head lice. Please take a few minutes now to check your child / children for head lice and to talk to them about how to avoid getting lice.

Tips to pass on to your children:

- Don't share person grooming items (brushes, combs, hair barrettes etc...)
- Don't share towels, headphones, sleeping bags, hats, scarves, pillows and stuffed animals.
- Use your own hangers at school. Do not leave clothes in piles – clothes that are piled stay warm and lice can move freely in the pile.
- Children with long hair should consider tying or braiding it, especially now as lice is occurring at their school.

For further information visit: MyHealth.Alberta.ca, contact Health Link Alberta at 1-866-408-5465, or a local public health nurse.

Sincerely,

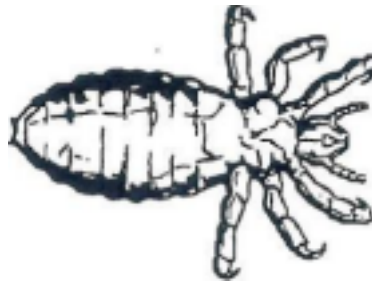
Principal
Wetaskiwin Regional Public School

Facts About Head Lice for Parents

How to Recognize Head Lice:

Adult head lice are tiny wingless insects, oval in shape and brownish in color. They are about the size of a sesame seed with six legs (with claws so they can cling to hair). Lice cannot fly or jump. Adult lice live close to the skin on the head and lay their eggs (nits) on the hair shafts, often at the nape of the neck or behind the ears. Nits are grayish white in colour and oval shaped. The oval eggs are firmly attached to the hair close to the scalp. Nits may look like dandruff but cannot flick off or be washed off with ordinary shampoo. Nits take 7-10 days to hatch. The new lice come out of the nits and feed off the scalp or move onto new hair. In 10-14 days they become mature lice. Mature lice live about 20 days and can lay 4 or more eggs per day. When the eggs hatch in 7 to 10 days they leave an empty shell that sticks to the hair shaft. As the hair grows about 1 cm a month, the nit moves further from the scalp. Nits that are **not** near the scalp are empty eggs and are not a source of new lice. The presence of head lice on the scalp may cause irritation and itching.

Common sites for head lice



How Lice are spread:

Lice are spread by direct contact with someone who has them (**head to head**) or by direct contact with items such as combs, brushes. Hats, earphones, pillows, clothes and towels **may** also be sources of head lice. Head lice can only survive 1 to 2 days away from the human body. Head lice live only on humans. They do not come from animals like cats or dogs. They do not spread disease. Having head lice is **not** a sign of being unclean.

How To Treat Head Lice:

Step 1:

Several over-the-counter treatments are available. These products contain insecticide that kills the lice. Your pharmacist can help you choose a product. It is important to apply the product according to the package instructions. Some products recommend washing hair first with ordinary shampoo, do not use shampoo with conditioner or apply conditioner. Most products must be applied to dry hair. It is important to check package instructions before use. Do not leave the product in the hair longer than the package recommends.

Check all family members for head lice and treat everyone in the house who has lice at the same time. Do **not** treat anyone with head lice products if they do not have lice. **Children 2 years or under or pregnant women should not be treated with lice shampoo. Do not use lice treatments on open sores or infected skin.**

Step 2:

24 to 48 hours after treatment check hair and scalp for the presence of live lice. If no live lice are present re-treat in 7 to 10 days with the same product used in Step 1. If live lice are found 24 to 48 hours after the initial treatment proceed to Step 3.

Step 3:

If there are live lice 24 to 48 hours after initial treatment, re-treat with a different over-the-counter head lice product. Your pharmacist can help you choose a second product. Check for live lice again in 24 to 48 hours. If no live lice are found then re-treat with the second product 7 to 10 days later. If live lice or new nits are found within 7 days of the second treatment consult your physician.

Other Things To Do:

- Soak or wash all combs, brushes, barrettes and hair accessories in hot soapy water for ten minutes. Make sure hair is removed from them
- Bedding, scarves, hats and coats can be washed **in** the washing machine.
- Vacuum mattresses, pillows, and rugs
- Stuffed animals, headgear and other items that cannot be washed can be stored in plastic bags for 10 days
- **The use of lice sprays is unnecessary**

Prevention:

Discourage children from using other people's belongings i.e. combs, brushes, etc. Tie long hair back or keep it in braids when lice outbreaks occur in the school. Check your children periodically throughout the school year for lice.