



Administrative Procedure 318 Appendix

FRASER HEALTH RECOMMENDED HEAD LICE MANAGEMENT

Appendix Link: Fraser Health Recommended Head Lice Management

<http://www.fraserhealth.ca/health-info/health-topics/school-health/head-lice/>

Appendix

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1. Information about Head Lice (Pediculosis)

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Head Lice (Pediculosis)	
What is it?	<p>Head lice are tiny insects that live on the scalp. Lice have 3 stages in their life cycle:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nits (eggs) are whitish gray, tan, or yellow ovals, about the size of a grain of sand. They are found stuck to the hair, often behind the ears or at the back of the neck. Nits hatch in 9 – 10 days. • Nymphs are young lice. They look like adults but are smaller. • Adult lice are about the size of a sesame seed. Adult lice can live up to 30 days on a person's head. They move around on the scalp and are much more difficult to see than nits. <p>Detection of a live louse is the best way to confirm head lice. The most effective method of detecting live lice is by using a fine tooth lice comb on dry or wet hair.</p> <p>Signs and symptoms of head lice may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Itchy scalp (may be worse at night) ➤ Scratching marks or small red lesions like a rash ➤ Child may have head lice and not have any symptoms <p>Nymphs and adult lice can live for up to 2 days away from the scalp. Eggs can live for up to 3 days away from the scalp but need the higher temperature near the scalp to hatch.</p>
How is it spread?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Direct hair to hair contact is the most common method of spread. ➤ Indirect contact when children share hats, combs, hairbrushes, hair accessories, helmets, or headphones. <p>Head lice cannot fly or hop, but they do crawl very quickly.</p> <p>Head lice that live on people cannot live on pets, such as cats and dogs.</p>
Incubation period	Period from laying of eggs to emerging adult lice is 14 – 23 days
How long can head lice be spread?	As long as live lice and live nits are present
How to prevent spread of the infestation to other children.	<p>Child does not need to be excluded from a child care facility or school.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Provide parents with information regarding checking for head lice and treatment options. ➤ Discourage direct head to head contact between children. ➤ Encourage children not to share things like hats, combs, hairbrushes, helmets, or headphones. ➤ Items that may have been in prolonged or intimate contact with the child's head at the school or child care facility can be washed in hot water. Items that can't be washed can be placed in a plastic bag for 2 weeks or in the freezer for 48 hours.

2. Option A – Chemical Shampoo Treatment

Steps to Follow

Do	Remember
<p>1. Apply Lice Shampoo to dry hair. Treat all infested family members at the same time. Read directions carefully.</p>	<p>1. Unless you treat all infested family members, head lice can be passed on from one person to another when heads touch.</p>
<p>2. Remove all nits by gently using a metal "nit" comb or use your fingers to pull nits from the single strands of hair.</p>	<p>2. Metal nit combs are available at your local pharmacy. If it tugs the hair, it may be upside down. Place lice/nits in a bowl of hot soapy water. Flush down the toilet when done.</p>
<p>3. If live, active lice are seen 24 to 48 hours after the first treatment, resistance or a heavy infestation should be suspected. Immediate treatment is recommended using a different product, followed by a second treatment seven days later.</p>	<p>3. The medications are to be kept out of the reach of young children. These medications cannot be used for infants. Pregnant or nursing mothers should only use head lice medications following advice from their doctor.</p>
<p>4. Apply Lice Shampoo a second time 7 – 10 days after the first shampoo. Repeat step 2.</p>	<p>4. A second shampoo will make sure that any head lice which hatch after the first shampoo will be killed before they have a chance to lay any eggs. Two shampoos and a follow-up head check with nit removal is the best way to make sure head lice are gone.</p>
<p>5. If live head lice or new nits are found, try Option B. Consult a Public Health Nurse if you have any questions.</p>	<p>5. Wet combing breaks the life cycle of head lice by removing them before they are grown and able to reproduce.</p>

3. Option B – Wet Combing Method Treatment

Remove the Lice

Wet combing is based on the life cycle of lice. It focuses on removing the live lice and does not require removing nits from the head. Combing treatments are done every 3 – 4 days over a two-week period – to break the life cycle of the lice by removing them before they are fully grown and able to spread or lay eggs. This option is safe for infants and pregnant women. Re-infestation can occur – consult your [local health unit](#) if you need more options.

Steps to Follow

Do	Remember
1. Wash hair with ordinary shampoo and rinse.	1. Note: on average, a wet combing session takes about ½ hour per person
2. Apply ½ cup of conditioner (any brand) all over head and scalp. Do not rinse out the conditioner.	2. Untangle hair with a regular wide toothed comb. Wet conditioner will immobilize the lice.
3. Comb sections of hair using a metal nit comb. Divide the hair into small sections and firmly draw the comb from the scalp to the end of the hair. After each stroke rinse the comb in a sink or bowl of warm water and wipe dry. Do the entire head making sure the head stays very wet.	3. Metal nit combs are available at your local pharmacy. If it tugs the hair it may be upside down.
4. Rinse hair. Leave the hair dripping wet. Repeat step 3 combing without conditioner until no lice are found.	4. Check the comb and your fingernails for lice (you don't want to give them a ride back to your head).
5. Repeat steps 1 – 4 every 3 – 4 days for two weeks (For example, wet comb on day 1, day 5, day 9, day 13)	5. Use a wide tooth comb to untangle and then use the fine-tooth metal nit comb again.
6. If you find any lice following treatment, this is a new infestation of lice and you will need to wet comb the hair for another two weeks.	6. This breaks the life cycle of the louse by removing the lice before they are fully grown and able to spread or lay eggs.

After Treatment Checklist

- Wash in hot water, all bedding, towels and clothes used in the past 2-3 days including those worn during treatment.
- Launder all washable clothing, bedding, and towels in small loads with hot water and/or put in hot dryer for 20 minutes.
- Wash hair brushes, combs and hair accessories (barrettes, ribbons, etc.) with hot soapy water.
- Anything that can't be washed (i.e.; Blankets, coats, headwear, stuffed toys) can be treated by: placing in a closed plastic bag for 10 days or putting in a hot dryer for 20 minutes or putting in the freezer for 48 hours or ironing it.
- There is no evidence that a major cleaning of the house is needed to get rid of head lice. Only items that have been in direct contact with the affected person(s) need to be washed.
- Repeat treatment according to option chosen. Notify those in contact with child that lice/nits were found, i.e.; school, Brownies, Scouts, sports teams, friends.

4. Myths and Facts About Head Lice (Head Lice Speak Up)

(Adapted from “Is there Lice in the Class Room?”)

- Myth 1:** The presence of head lice is a sign of poor personal hygiene
Fact: We prefer a clean scalp. It doesn't matter to us your sex, age, race or how much money you have.
- Myth 2:** Only children get head lice.
Fact: We like adults as much as children, but it is easier to move from one child to another because of their close contact in daycare, preschools or schools.
- Myth 3:** If your head isn't itchy, you don't have lice.
Fact: Contrary to common thinking, we may be in your hair for weeks or months without making you itch. In fact, even though we are in your hair, only 1/3 of you will scratch.
- Myth 4:** Long hair encourages infestation.
Fact: We are more interested in your scalp than your hair so cutting your hair will not get rid of us.
- Myth 5:** Head lice can be “caught” from plants, pets and other animals.
Fact: I can live on YOU, but I can't live on your plants, pets or other animals.
- Myth 6:** Head lice can jump and fly from one person to another.
Fact: We don't have wings. We can't jump, but we can run quickly from one head to another “wherever and whenever heads meet.” We may hide in hats and other headgear, scarves, hair accessories, helmets, head phones, etc. We can only survive for 48 hours away from your head.
- Myth 7:** An itchy scalp following treatments is a sign of treatment failure.
Fact: Your scalp may be itchy for up to 10 days after successful treatment. If your head is itchy past 10 days, it may be a sign I am still there or my friends have moved in.
- Myth 8:** Head lice cause disease. An outbreak of head lice is a public health emergency.
Fact: I am a nuisance but I do not carry germs or spread disease.
- Myth 9:** No-nit policies are effective in eliminating head lice.
Fact: There is no evidence that shows no-nit policies reduce head lice infestations. Nits are removed to enhance the effectiveness of treatment, but should not be a reason to keep a child out of school.
- Myth 10:** The presence of nits means an active infestation.
Fact: 10-30% of children with nits never develop an active infestation.

5. Treatment Options Adapted from Health File 06

Treatment is to be considered only if head lice or live nits are found. Head lice will not go away without treatment. If one person in the family has head lice, there is a good chance other family members do as well. Check all family members and treat those who have head lice all at the same time. This will help to make sure head lice are properly treated and will not spread.

Chemical treatments

Non-prescription medications: Shampoos, creams and rinses that contain an ingredient that kills lice are available at most pharmacies without a prescription. Follow exactly the directions for use on the label.

After treatment comb the hair well with your fingers or a special head lice comb to remove all nits or eggs.

Thorough combing is just as important as the use of the medication.

The treatment may need to be repeated in 7 to 10 days. Itching may last for seven to 10 days, even after successful treatment.

Non-Chemical treatments

Wet-combing: This method removes live head lice. Wet-combing is cheap and safe but takes time to complete. The combing steps must be followed carefully and completely. Combing treatments are done using generous amounts of hair conditioner and a special lice comb, every three to four days for a two-week period. Any young lice that hatch from eggs after the first session are removed at the second, third and fourth sessions. This is why it is important to do the full four sessions.

Treatment methods not recommended

Methods and products that is not to be used because they are either not safe or do not work include: insect sprays, motor oil, gasoline, alcohol, flea soap, dyes, bleaches, heat applied to the scalp, garlic, essential oils, and shaving the head.

What should be cleaned?

Head lice do not survive for long once they are off the scalp. Head lice do not pose a risk to others through contact with furniture or carpets. There is no evidence that a major cleaning of the house or car is necessary.

On the day you start the treatment, wash all dirty clothes, bedding, towels, brushes and combs in hot water. Items that cannot be washed, for example pillows or stuffed animals, can be placed in a plastic bag for ten days or in the freezer for 48 hours. A child's car seat may be vacuumed as a precaution.

Reference: Sections 7, 17, 20, 22, 65, 85 School Act
Child, Family and Community Service Act
Island Health Recommended Head Lice Management
American Academy of Pediatrics. Clinical Report – Head Lice, July 26, 2010, Pediatrics.
<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/126/2/392.full.pdf>
Canadian Pediatric Society, Head Lice, http://www.caringforkids.cps.ca/handouts/head_lice
HealthLinkBC, Head Lice, <https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/healthfiles/hfile06.stm>
Interior Health website on head lice management, which includes a power point presentation and video on the treatment of head lice,
<http://www.interiorhealth.ca/YourHealth/SchoolHealth/HeadLice/Pages/default.aspx>

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