

HEAD LICE GIVING YOU TROUBLE?

Head lice are tiny insects with flat bodies and claws. “Nits” are lice eggs. They’re white to grey and they glue to the hair. The first sign may be itching and scratching. The best way to know for sure is to look for live lice on the scalp, particularly around the ears and at the back of the neck. Use a magnifying glass if possible.

Head lice are a social nuisance, not a health problem. Their presence has nothing to do with being dirty or clean. They don’t carry disease or cause illness.

Parents should:

- check their children’s heads weekly for signs of infestation (more often during an outbreak).
- notify the school when their child has lice, as well as others who have come into contact with the child (such as family members, neighbours, etc.).

To get rid of head lice:

- Although you may hear of other treatments, use a head lice shampoo, cream rinse or lotion and follow instructions closely. Ask your pharmacist how to use it effectively.
- Some of the eggs may survive the first treatment. Remove all the nits that you find using your thumb and index finger to slide them off the hair shaft into a plastic bag (a metal comb specially designed for nit removal makes this easier).
- Put hats, bed sheets and towels used by an affected person in the dryer for 30 minutes. Other items can be vacuumed.
- Tell your child not to share hats, brushes, combs or other hair accessories.



None of the products on the market kill 100% of the nits. That’s why a second treatment is needed.

- Some nits may be resistant to the product you have chosen. If you find live lice or nits 24 to 48 hours after the first treatment, choose a different product and treat again immediately. Treat once more 7 to 10 days later.
- Continue to check your child’s head twice a week for four weeks and then weekly after that.

The Health Unit can assist by providing training to groups upon request.