

How do I treat head lice?

There are three methods of treating head lice: Insecticide, Non-insecticidal alternatives and a 10-day conditioner treatment

. Choose whichever method best suits you and your family. For successful removal of head lice, be sure to follow the directions for your preferred treatment exactly.

Household Cleaning

Head lice do not live long away from the scalp and nits are unlikely to hatch at room temperature. Excessive cleaning of personal, school and household items is therefore not necessary. As a precaution, wash bed linen, hats, in hot water and dry in a hot dryer. Wash combs, brushes or anything put on the head with soap and boil in water for 10 minutes. Storing items in plastic bags for 10-14 days also kills the lice.

Exclusion from School/Daycare

It is recommended that children stay home from school/daycare until the first treatment for head lice is complete and there is no evidence of live crawling lice. The parent must continue treatment until all eggs and live lice have been removed, usually over the following 10 days.

****Please Note: All schools in Anglophone School District West have a nit free policy. Children are excluded from school until there is an absence of Lice and nits.**

'Trouble-shooting' Checklist

If treatment is unsuccessful, check the following:

- Was insecticide applied exactly as recommended by package instructions?
- Was treatment repeated in 7-10 days?
- Was the 10 day conditioning treatment continued for 10 days (hatching cycle of the eggs)?
- Were as many eggs as possible removed every day?
- Was a metal fine tooth 'nit' comb used?
- Was plenty of hair conditioner applied to saturate the hair?

Prevention Activities/Ideas to Help Prevent Infestation

- Check your child's hair every week for head lice and eggs (nits). Be particularly watchful after sleepovers, camp, after school breaks and at the beginning of the school year.
- Tie long hair back – braid and/or put up if possible.
- Consider applying hair gel or mousse – these do not prevent or repel lice but help keep stray hair strands from contact with other heads.
- Avoid sharing combs, brushes, hats, hair bands, scrunchies and head sets.
- Remind your child to try to avoid head-to-head contact with other children, e.g., when working at the computer with others, or when playing, or hugging.
- Encourage children to put hats and scarves in the sleeves of their coats.

We all have to work together to help reduce the spread of head lice. Regular inspection of your child's scalp is the best possible preventative measure.