

# Head Lice Were Found in Your Child's Class



Head lice continue to be a community problem. While head lice are a nuisance, they are not a health hazard or communicable disease. The control of head lice requires the co-operative efforts of parents and school personnel. We are asking all families in the class to check their children for possible head lice.

## What are head lice?

Head Lice are tiny, wingless bugs that live on the head. They are about the size of a sesame seed and are grey to reddish-brown in colour. Nits are the eggs of head lice. Nits are small, yellowish-white ovals that are about half the size of a pinhead that are attached to hair.

## How head lice spread

Head lice do not jump or fly, but can crawl quickly. They are usually spread by direct head-to-head contact. Lice can be spread through sharing hats, brushes or hair accessories.

## How do I check for head lice?

To confirm a case of head lice, you need to find live lice. Children can have a few nits without actually having a case of head lice. Usually children have no more than 10 to 20 live lice.

- Good lighting is important when you are checking.
- Head lice move fast and are hard to see. They are usually found very close to the scalp, at the bottom of the neck and behind the ears.
- To look for nits, part hair in small sections, moving from one side of the head to the other. Check carefully, looking close to the scalp.

## What to do when you find lice

- When lice is found, treat your child (see below)
- You can call Telehealth Ontario (1-866-797-0000, TTY: 1-866-797-0007, for free access to a registered nurse - 24 hours a day, 7 days a week)
- Consult your pharmacist for appropriate treatment and/or talk to your physician
- Check out more information at: [www.caringforkids.cps.ca/handouts/head\\_lice](http://www.caringforkids.cps.ca/handouts/head_lice)

## How can head lice be treated?

Buy a head lice product from the drugstore and *follow the directions carefully*. Usually you need to repeat the treatment after a week. (Check the recommendation of the product you use.) Your pharmacist can help you choose the best product. Consult your pharmacist or doctor to make sure the product is appropriate for all of the people in your home (some are not to be used under a certain age or when a person has certain medical conditions, etc.).

## Make sure it doesn't spread

- Teach children how head lice are spread and how to avoid them.
- Keep long hair tied back.
- Do not share headgear such as hats, scarves, hair clips, helmets or headphones and do not use other people's pillows, towels, combs, or brushes.
- Check your child's scalp once a week under good lighting.