

About Head Lice



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Dear Parents:

A case of head lice has been found in your child's grade.

As a precaution, you are advised to check your child's hair for nits weekly. Catching an infestation early makes head lice much easier to remove and reduces the possibility of it further spreading throughout the school. Thank you for your support.



How to Check for Head Lice

The easiest way to confirm a case of head lice is to find their eggs (nits).

1. Get a good light and a magnifying glass.
2. Start parting the hair looking closely at the roots of the hair shaft for nits - tiny oval shaped eggs cemented to one side of the hair shaft.
3. Try to remove anything suspicious looking by pulling it off the hair shaft. If it moves easily, it is not a nit. If it does not move, have a closer look for more nits in the general area.

If you do find nits, you may or may not see live lice, which are about the size of a sesame seed, tan to brown in colour (some are transparent) and move very quickly.

If you find lice or nits, treat your child immediately using the wet-combing method of removal (for full instructions, please visit www.liceclinic.ca).

Additionally, all other family members should be screened or treated with the wet-combing method if nits are found. Please contact schools/sports teams/anybody in close contact with your child over the past few weeks. These are important steps that can help prevent community wide outbreaks.



Head Lice Facts, Fiction and Prevention

- Head lice cannot survive longer than 48 hours once removed from a human head.
- They cannot jump or fly.
- Upon hatching, head lice live for just over a month with the adult females laying up to 10 nits per day once they are fertilized.
- Nits vary from tan to brownish-grey in colour and are approximately half the size of a sesame seed. They hatch seven to ten days after being laid.
- Dandruff is commonly mistaken for nits but is white, irregularly shaped and easily moved. Nits are always the same shape and glued firmly to one side of the hair shaft.
- Catch head lice early by screening weekly and watching for frequent scratching.
- Tie back long hair at school and activities. Refrain from sharing hats, combs, brushes or hair accessories.

The Greater Vancouver Lice Clinic proudly offers a complimentary email answering service and a telephone hotline for all of your Head Lice related questions.

The Clinic also offers both in-house and out-call lice screening and removal services. Lice removal kits and combs are also available.

The Greater Vancouver Lice Clinic recommends against using chemical treatments (also known as pesticide shampoos) because they have no effect on the nits or newborn nymphs (babies). These must be combed out with a high quality metal lice comb.