

## **Let's talk about head lice.**

Did you know that lice are very common and in every school? They also seem to really like Division 1 students, and every school year we have multiple occurrences of these little nits in our classrooms.

At Madonna we follow the guidelines given to us by Alberta Health Services. As soon as we are notified by a parent or a teacher that there has been an infestation in a classroom, parents in that class are immediately sent home a very informative and thorough pamphlet from Health Services (this is attached in this document below).

It is **very important** that when this pamphlet comes home, you read it thoroughly and treat accordingly. One of the suggestions from Health Services is that we are to ***encourage parents to have lice head checks incorporated into your child's usual bath time or at least once a week.***

When there is an occurrence in the classroom we are now ensuring that coats and hats are separated in the hallways from each other, as lice crawl to a new site, they do not jump. As well, lice cannot live without a human head for more than 2 days.

We encourage you to contact us if your child has head lice. It is a common occurrence and something we would like to help control at the school level as soon as possible.

If you require more information please contact one of the Nurses at 1 866 408 LINK (5465) or visit <https://myhealth.alberta.ca/Pages/default.aspx>

## What you should know:

Lice treatments may look like regular creme rinses but they contain a strong chemical that kills head lice.

- Do **not** use lice treatments if your child does not have head lice.
- Lice treatments kill head lice – they will not kill all of the nits (eggs).
- Nits that are within ½ inch of the scalp may hatch later. These can be picked out by hand.
- Lice may not die immediately. 1% Permethrin will continue to work for 7 to 10 days after you use it.
- Hair dryers, hair conditioners, vinegar rinses and chlorinated swimming pools should be avoided for 7-10 days after treatment because the chemical will stop working.
- It is common for itching to continue after using lice treatments. It does not necessarily mean an allergy to the chemical or that all of the lice have not been killed.
- The chemical in lice treatments and other treatment products can make people sick if they use it too much.

### Caution:

If you are pregnant or breastfeeding, and have head lice or if you are treating others with head lice, talk to your physician or a community health nurse.

If you have a child under 2 years of age with nits or lice, pick them out carefully. The child may not need chemical treatment if they do not have much hair.

If you have an allergy to chrysanthemums, talk with a community health nurse. This product is in the available lice treatments and you may need to use another kind of treatment.

For health advice and information 24 hours a day, seven days a week, call Capital Health Link at 408-LINK (5465) or outside the local calling area, call toll-free 1-866-408-LINK. Visit [www.capitalhealth.ca](http://www.capitalhealth.ca) for health information online.



## Head Lice - What to Do. How to Do It.

### To Parent or Guardian:

A case of head lice has just been found in your child's classroom/daycare. Your child may have been in contact with this case. To avoid the spread of head lice, please check your child's head for lice today and every day for the next week. To prevent the spread of lice, please check for head lice regularly.

### How To Check:

- 1 Carefully separate the hair with your fingers and look for adult lice or nits (eggs).
- 2 Look through the entire head. Be sure to look carefully behind the ears and at the base of the neck. This is where lice and nits are most often found.
- 3 You might see a tiny, crawling insect that moves quickly but does not fly away.
- 4 You will probably see nits (eggs) which are tiny, white specks that look like dandruff glued to the hair and cannot be brushed off. They cannot be combed out either. Nits that are within ½ inch of the scalp may hatch.
- 5 If your child has head lice or nits (eggs), check everyone else who lives in your house.
- 6 It is important to identify live lice before treating.  
For accurate identification, using a fine tooth comb, start at the scalp and comb firmly down the hair. The entire head should be combed systematically at least twice. Examine for lice after each stroke. It may be easier if the hair is wet. It usually takes about one minute to find lice.  
If you find head lice, follow the treatment steps in this pamphlet.
- 7 If you are not sure what you have found, please call your public health centre or Capital Health Link.

# Head Lice - How To Treat:

Read the information sheet that comes with the lice treatment.

## What you will need:

- Shampoo (conditioner free)
- 1% Permethrin lice treatment (Nix®, Kwellada-P™)
- A regular comb or brush

## 1 Shampoo and Dry Hair

Use regular shampoo. The shampoo you use must not contain conditioner. Hair conditioner will coat the hair and the lice treatment will not work. It is important that you do not use a hair conditioner for 7 days after a lice treatment too.

Comb or brush hair.

Dry hair completely.

## 2 Apply Lice Treatment and leave it on for 10 min.

Apply the lice treatment to dry hair. Apply enough product to completely saturate the hair and scalp.

Rub the lice treatment into the scalp all over the head, not just where you see the nits (eggs).

Make sure you cover the hair behind the ears and at the base of the neck.

Leave lice treatment on the head for 10 minutes.

## 3 Rinse hair with water and let it dry.

Rinse the hair completely with warm, running water.

Towel dry the hair. Do not use a hair dryer.

Remove tangles and then comb hair with a fine tooth comb to remove as many lice as possible.



## 4 Remove the nits (eggs).

Nits that are within ½ inch of the scalp may hatch. These can be picked out by hand. Nits that are more than ½ inch from the scalp will not hatch but may be removed for cosmetic purposes.

You can pull nits off the hair shaft with your thumb and finger. **Nits do not comb or brush out easily.**

You will not get all of the nits out in one picking.

## 5 Comfort your child.

Make sure your child knows that anyone can get head lice. Having head lice does not mean your child is dirty. In fact, lice really like clean hair!

Make sure head lice checks are a regular part of your child's hygiene routine.

## 6 Clean personal items

Wash hats, scarves, combs, brushes, hair barrettes, bed sheets and pillow cases in hot, soapy water.

You do not have to do any other special cleaning. Head lice cannot live away from the human head for more than 2 days, so they are not likely to be on the carpet, furniture or other things around the house.

## 7 Repeat these steps for other family members only if they have lice or nits (eggs).

Check all family members for lice or nits (eggs).

Treat all family members who have head lice or nits on the same day so the lice do not have a chance to spread to other people.

Wash your hands after treating each person in the family.

## 8 Check the head again in 48 hours. If no lice are found, repeat the treatment after 7-10 days.

If live lice are seen, ensure all steps were followed correctly. If steps were missed, or hair products with conditioner were used or if reinfestation was likely, repeat the treatment with the same product immediately and again in 7-10 days.

If all steps were followed correctly, treat again with a different chemical product, and repeat the treatment in 7-10 days with the second product.

The follow-up treatment (recommended in 7-10 days) is to kill any newly hatched lice from nits that might have survived the initial treatment(s) and were not removed manually.

**By checking your child's head at least once a week, you can find head lice and get rid of them before the first eggs hatch!**

**That's it - you're done!**