



Ballymore National School

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**Under the Patronage of the Church of Ireland
Bishop of Derry and Raphoe.**

HEAD LICE POLICY

Headlice spread very easily and can cause a lot of trouble and upset for children and families. It is vital that children are treated correctly as outlined in information sheets and on 'over the counter' treatments.

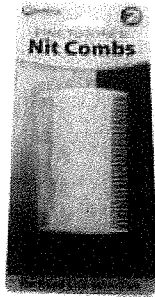
School Policy:

Head lice infection is a community problem not a school one. However, the school will support families in their efforts to eradicate the problem.

The following measures will be taken, if deemed necessary:

- If the parents inform the school that their child has head lice, or if there is a confirmed case of head lice in the school, a text will be sent to all families in the school. Please inform the school immediately when you become aware of a problem.
- If a child returns to school and is still infected, the school will contact the parents and request that the treatment be repeated. Every effort will be made to ensure this is done in such a way as not to attract unfair attention to the child in question.
- If an ongoing problem occurs, the school may contact the local Health nurse to offer advice to families on how best to treat the problem.

HOW TO PREVENT AND TREAT HEAD LICE

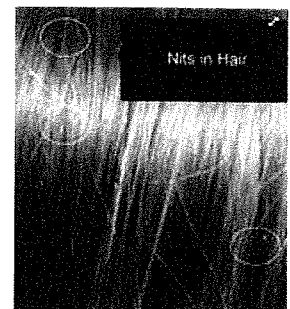
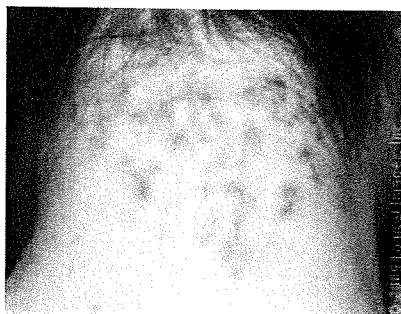


In order to prevent the spread of head lice in school it is important that you check your child's hair regularly, and if necessary, treat thoroughly with any lotion recommended by a chemist or doctor. Head lice treatments are available from any chemist. Routine head inspections are no longer carried out in schools but you may find the following information helpful.

How do you catch head lice?

Head lice cannot jump or fly. They like to live close to the scalp. They are only caught when two people's heads are in contact for some time.

How do you know you have got head lice?



Signs of head lice include: live or dead lice in the hair, nits (empty egg cases), an itchy head, a rash round the neck or ears dark gritty dust on pillows or collars.

A weekly family check for head lice helps prevent infection:


Wash the hair and using a fine-toothed nit comb (available from chemists), comb the wet hair from the roots over a sheet of paper. If nits or eggs are found keep combing every other day for a week to ensure there are no live lice. If one is found, tell those in close contact and begin treatment. Sometimes head lice return because the treatment was not carried out thoroughly and eggs survived. Hair should not normally be treated more than twice in three weeks. If the problem persists, speak to the doctor.

***Your child should only be treated for head lice if there is evidence of live louse. Please follow the directions of the Head Lice Treatment carefully.**

HSE information leaflet for parents:

DON'T BUG ME!

TRUTH AND LICE



PARENTS...

THESE PAGES ARE PART OF THE HEAD LICE CHECKER WHICH YOU CAN GET AT THE PHARMACY. IT HELPS YOU TO CHECK FOR HEAD LICE AND NITS.

HOW TO USE THE WET-COMBING CHILD'S HAIR

- Buy the detection comb at a pharmacy
- Hair should be wet, use regular shampoo
- Put lots of any conditioner on
- Comb from roots right to ends of hair
- Work through hair, section by section, checking comb each time
- Have plenty light, daylight is best
- If moving lice are found, check all family
- Do this every week

SOME TIPS FOR BEING LONELY

- Treat everyone in family who have living, moving lice, at same time
- Hair should be dry
- Pharmacist will advise on which lotion (See answer to Question 11, inside)
- Read the instructions carefully
- Work through hair section by section until all of scalp has lotion on it - down to where you would put ponytail band
- Repeat one week later

1. WHAT ARE HEAD LICE?

They are grey/brown insects, from pin-head or sesame seed to match-head in size (1 - 3 mm long) that live close to the scalp on humans. The insects lay eggs. Each egg is glued to a hair, often near the root. Lice and unhatched eggs are hard to spot.

2. WHAT ARE NITS?

Nits are the empty egg cases left behind when the lice hatch out. They are usually pearly white. Both eggs and nits are very difficult to remove from the hair.

3. HOW DO LICE SPREAD?

When two heads are touching for a minute or more, the lice climb rapidly through the hair from one head to another. They don't jump, fly or swim. Lice that fall from the head or smudge onto bedding or hats are usually dying and harmless. Lice caught on combs can re-establish if they are combed back on again within 48 hours.

4. BUT I'VE SEEN THEM JUMP ON THE COMB

This is due to static electricity, making them appear to fly off the comb.

5. WHO CAN GET THEM?

Anyone with hair. They aren't fussy about clean or dirty hair. Children tend to get them more than adults, probably because they put their heads together more than adults do.

6. WHERE DO YOU GET THEM?

Anywhere. Children get them wherever they mix with other children, this can be in the home, at school or childcare facility or other activity venue.

7. HOW DO I KNOW IF MY CHILD HAS HEAD LICE?

The main symptom is itching, but you can have head lice for up to six weeks before you notice any itching. Only about one third of children have an itch. The best way to find them easily is to check your child's hair regularly (once a week) by wet combing. Detection combs can be bought in a pharmacy. To work well, combs should have rigid, flat-toothed, plastic teeth, set not more than 0.3mm apart.

8. HOW DO I WET-COMB MY CHILD'S HAIR

Wash the hair with your ordinary shampoo. Put on lots of any conditioner and comb it through with an ordinary comb. This makes any lice really wet, which keeps them still. Then, using the detection comb, slot the teeth of the comb into the hair at the roots and draw the comb down to the ends. Check the comb for lice every time you do this. Make sure there is good light, daylight is best. Continue until you have worked through each section of hair and have checked the whole head. Rinse off the conditioner and repeat the combing while the hair is still wet.

9. HOW OFTEN SHOULD I DO THIS?

It is a good idea to get into a routine and do it about once a week. This means you will be able to treat early if you find living, moving lice. Treating early helps cut down on the number of people in the family, or who are close to the child, who will get head lice.

10. WHAT DO I DO IF I FIND LICE?

If you find lice, you should check everyone else in the family and treat only those who have them. Also let people who have been in close contact with anyone with lice know, so they can check as well!

11. WHAT DO I USE TO TREAT THE LICE?

The best way to treat is with a lotion (not a shampoo or mousse). These can be bought over the counter in a pharmacy. In the past, chemical insecticides were used to treat head lice. Oil based products are now recommended, sold under different brand names (Full Marks spray or solution/ Hedrin spray gel). These products have a physical effect, so the lice do not get 'resistant' to them. Your pharmacist is the best person to advise you on which one to get. If you are buying products outside of the Republic of Ireland, you need to discuss this with the pharmacist before you buy.

12. HOW DO I USE THE LOTION?

There will be instructions on how to put on the treatment and how long to leave it on for, in the box - each of the products is slightly different. Put the lotion on dry hair. Part the hair near the top of the head, put lotion onto the scalp and rub it in. Part the hair a bit further down and do the same thing again. Do this over and over again until all sections of hair have been done and the whole scalp is wet. You don't need to put lotion any further down than where you would put a ponytail band. Treat everyone with lice at the same time so that untreated people don't infect the treated ones again.

Even if the preparation recommends only one application it is important that you put it on again a week later. The reason for this is that no treatment is guaranteed to kill unhatched eggs. The eggs that aren't killed will hatch over about one week.

2 days later: Check hair for living, moving lice.

Once treatment is complete continue with the weekly checking.

13. WHAT IF I FIND NITS AFTER TREATMENT?

If you find nits but don't find lice, don't treat. Nits are the empty egg cases which are glued to the hair. They will be left behind on the hairs after you have treated but this doesn't mean the treatment has failed.

14. WHAT IF I KEEP FINDING LICE

There could be 2 reasons for this, it could be because your child has been re-infected with lice, or the treatment wasn't carried out correctly. Check the whole family again and treat all those with lice again. Remember to spread the word to family and friends. If you still find lice after that, ask your GP or pharmacist for advice.

15. WHAT IF I STILL HAVE NITS

Nits (empty egg cases), on their own, do not need to be treated. You can remove them by hand or fine tooth combing if you don't like the look of them. They can be hard to remove because they are glued to the hair.

16. BUT MY CHILD IS STILL SCRATCHING

People can scratch after treatment but it doesn't mean they still have lice. Check your child's head to be sure, but only treat if you find living moving lice. The treatments can make the scalp flaky and itchy. Also, some people scratch just thinking or talking about lice.

17. SHOULD I USE A LOTION 'JUST IN CASE'?

No, you should only use the treatment if you find living, moving lice. The treatments are safe but they shouldn't be over used. They can also make the itching worse.

18. I'VE HEARD TREE OIL IS GOOD FOR KILLING AND PREVENTING LICE

There is no evidence that it works and it can irritate your scalp. Nor is there evidence for alcohol, electric combs, products sold to prevent head lice infection (repellents) or any other folk remedy.

19. SHOULDN'T NURSES CHECK CHILDREN'S HEADS?

No. This is not practical and it will not stop head lice spreading. It is much better for parents to check their children's heads regularly (about once a week) as described in this leaflet.

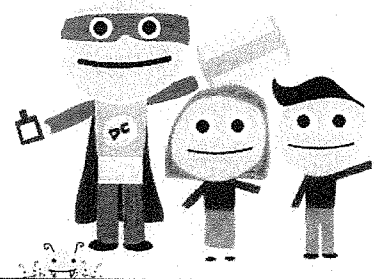
However, public health nurses who go into schools and practice nurses in your GP surgery are available to give help and advice about head lice to parents.

20. WHAT ABOUT THE SCHOOL OR CHILDCARE FACILITY-CAN THEY DO ANYTHING?

In the past 'alert' letters have been sent out, but these tend to cause stress to children and parents and sometimes outbreaks of imaginary lice. It is much better for all parents to check their children's heads regularly. Alert letters to remind parents to check their children's hair will be sent out when there are a number of children with head lice in the class.

21. SHOULD I KEEP MY CHILD OFF SCHOOL?

NO! Lice are unpleasant and some people sometimes feel embarrassed if they get them, but they are not a health hazard. There is no reason for your child to miss out on their childcare or their education just because of head lice.



KEEP ALERT AND SPREAD THE WORD TO STOP THE SPREAD OF LICE.



HSE CHO1 Donegal, Cavan, Monaghan, Sligo & Leitrim

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Acknowledgement: Leaflet from Dept of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, Northern Ireland, UK, used with permission - some amendments

For more information contact your Public Health Nurse