

KEEP

LICE... LICE... LICE...

ALL THERE IS TO KNOW ABOUT HEAD LICE



Lice have been around for a long time and they are not about to disappear any time soon. They are not dangerous, although they can be annoying.



Did You Know that head lice...

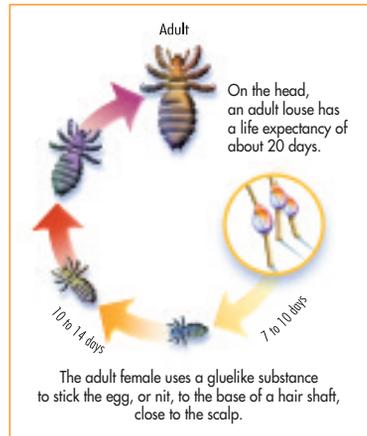
- Do not always cause itching.
- Are often found in children who go to school or to a child care centre, especially just after summer vacation.
- Can affect anybody, rich or poor.
- Are found in both clean and dirty hair.
- Feed on human blood.
- Are resistant to regular shampoos but can easily be eliminated by using special head-lice medication.
- Do not transmit diseases.
- Do not live on pets.

••• Head lice...

- Are minute greyish insects.
- Can live up to 30 days near the hair root and can sometimes be found on eyebrows and in beards.
- Lay 6 to 8 eggs (nits) per day.
- Do not jump or fly.

••• Nits...

- Are found firmly attached to the hair shaft.
- Are difficult to remove.



LIVE NITS

- Are greyish-white eggs that look like puffy, shiny, and translucent dandruff.
- Are usually found within 1 cm of the scalp.

DEAD NITS

- Are whiter and dried out.
- Are mainly found more than 1 cm from the scalp.



Dandruff, dust, or dirt that can be easily removed **is not a nit**.

••• How do you get head lice?

- Lice can spread easily through **head-to-head contact**, like a hug, for example.
- Head lice **are not easily spread through contact with personal belongings** such as hats, combs, hairbrushes, and pillowcases, nor through contact with the back of sofas, or with sheets, carpets, eyeglasses, etc.



••• How do you find out if you have lice or nits?

By **CHECKING THE HEAD, PREFERABLY with a NIT COMB, a very fine-toothed comb designed for this purpose. Most often, there are less than 10 or 20 lice on an infested head, so it is important to perform a thorough examination.**

WHEN?

- At least once a week, during regular hair washing, especially when children have just returned to school from summer vacation.
- Every day, if there is a head lice infestation around.
- As soon as the scalp starts to get itchy.

HOW?

- Place the head under a good light: head lice flee from light and you can see them moving (a magnifying glass can help).
- Look for lice and nits, especially behind the ears and near the back of the neck.



- Separate the hair into tufts the width of the nit comb. In the case of very long hair, the tufts should be about 2 cm in width.
- Comb through the hair as described below (see *Removing nits*).
- Examine the hair section by section, from one side to the other and from the forehead back to the nape of the neck.
- Each time you run the comb through the hair, check to see if there are lice or nits on the comb.

Wash your hands after each examination.

● ● ● If you find lice or nits...

- **Apply** head lice medication as soon as possible.
- **Inform** the school or child care centre and anyone who has been in close contact with the infested person, as soon as possible. Your child can return to his or her group immediately after the first treatment has been applied.
- **Check** the heads of **all other family** members.



Treat ONLY those who have lice or live nits. The treatment is more effective when all family members who are infested are treated **at the same time** (on the same day).

● ● ● How to prevent head lice

Keep long hair tied back.

Remind children to:

- Avoid head-to-head contact.
- Keep hats, caps, and scarves in their coat sleeves.

Check the child's head regularly.

There is no preventive treatment. Only early screening and treatment of those infested can prevent head lice from spreading.

It is essential for parents to cooperate in preventing and controlling head lice.

Treating head lice



If you find lice or nits (eggs), you should treat your child with head-lice medication.

••• Choosing the product

The Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux recommends the following products:

- **First choice for the treatment**

Kwellada-P™ 1% or Nix® 1% (products containing permethrin).

These products are recommended for children 2 years of age or older.

- **In case of failure of treatment with permethrin**

Pronto™ or R & C™ (products containing pyrethrin and piperonyl butoxide).

These products can be used for children under 2 years of age.

Permethrin and pyrethrins can be used by pregnant women and nursing mothers, with permethrin being the first choice. Your attending physician should be informed during a follow-up consultation.

- **If the treatments recommended above fail**

Resultz™ can be used; follow the manufacturer's indications and instructions.

All these products are over-the-counter in pharmacies. While there are other head-lice products available on the market, their effectiveness has not been demonstrated in published studies.

Application of these products may cause itching or a mild burning sensation of the scalp.

If eyebrows are infested, apply petroleum jelly (Vaseline™ or Lacri-lube™) at least 2 to 4 times a day for 1 week. The dead nits can then be removed with the fingernails or tweezers, by sliding them along the eyebrow.

••• Number of applications

Regardless of the type of treatment you used, treatment includes **2** applications of the same product, the **second** application being 7 to 10 days after the first, even when live lice and active nits are no longer found in the hair.

If you find live **lice** (you must be certain so as to avoid overtreatment) 48 hours after the first application of the product, it is recommended that you repeat the treatment immediately, choosing a product with a different composition among those listed above.

If you have any doubts about the effectiveness of a treatment, consult a health-care professional.

Kwellada-P™ 1 % or Nix® 1 % (after shampooing)



Wash hair with a regular shampoo **that does not contain a conditioner**. Rinse hair with clear water and dry with a towel.



Shake the bottle well.



Wait 10 minutes.



Apply 25 to 50 mL of the product to the scalp (up to 100 mL for long hair). Massage thoroughly through hair, in particular near the back of the neck and behind the ears.



Rinse **thoroughly** with cool water over a bathtub or sink.



Dry hair with a different towel or with a hairdryer. Place the towels with other soiled laundry.



Comb through hair every day using a nit comb.

Repeat the application after 7 to 10 days

To allow the head-lice treatment to work effectively:

- Do not use a "2-in-1" shampoo or conditioner before applying the product.
- Do not wash the hair for 48 hours after applying the product.
- Do not use products containing vinegar.

Pronto™ or R & C™ (conditioning shampoo)



Apply 25 to 50 mL of the product to **dry hair** (up to 100 mL for long hair). Massage thoroughly through hair, in particular near the back of the neck and behind the ears.



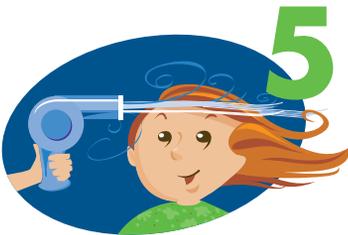
Wait **10 minutes** (without diluting).



Gradually add water until a lather forms.



Rinse thoroughly with clean water over a bathtub or sink.



Dry hair with a towel or with a hairdryer. Place the towel with other soiled laundry.



Comb through hair every day using a nit comb.

Repeat the application after 7 to 10 days

An individual-size bottle costs about \$10 and a family-size bottle about \$20.

With a prescription, head-lice medication can be obtained free of charge or at reduced cost, depending on the family's health-insurance plan.

A fine-toothed comb can be obtained for a few dollars at your local pharmacy. Some head-lice products come with a comb.

● ● ● Removing nits

If you receive a notice from the school or child care asking you to remove the nits, you should do the following:

- Apply a **damp towel to the scalp** for at least 30 minutes to help dislodge the nits.
- Place the head under a good light: head lice flee from light and you can see them moving (a magnifying glass can help).
- Get a nit comb and work near a source of hot water.
- Untangle hair with an ordinary comb.
- Separate the hair into tufts the width of the nit comb. In the case of very long hair, the tufts should be about 2 cm in width.
- Comb through each tuft of hair with a nit comb.
- Angle the nit comb towards the scalp and insert it into the tuft as close to the scalp as possible.
- Make sure that the entire length of the teeth is in the tuft.
- Comb out along the complete length of the hair.
- Examine the hair section by section, from one side to the other and from the forehead back to the nape of the neck.
- Pay particular attention to behind the ears and the nape of the neck.
- Soak the nit comb in hot water after running it through each tuft of hair.

To remove a nit which is resistant to the nit comb, use fingernails or eyebrow tweezers, sliding the nit along the length of the hair.

● ● ● Washing personal belongings

The risk of infestation through contact with personal belongings is minimal, but if you receive a notice from the school or child care centre, treat personal belongings (bedclothes, combs, hairbrushes, hats, caps, and other accessories) used on a regular basis by the infested person using one of the following methods:

- Soak belongings in undiluted head-lice medication for 5 to 10 minutes.
- or
- Soak belongings in hot water (around 65°C or 150°F) for 5 to 10 minutes.
- or
- Put clothing in the dryer set at the warmest setting for 20 minutes.
- or
- Dry-clean clothing.
- or
- Store belongings in a plastic bag for 10 days.

Spraying the house, furniture, or other household objects with pesticides is NOT recommended. Not only is this ineffective in controlling head lice, but it can also pose a serious health risk to people or animals exposed to a potentially toxic product. Carpets and sofas can be vacuumed.



This document may be consulted in the *Documentation* section of the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux Web site at: www.msss.gouv.qc.ca

Legal deposit
Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec, 2009
Library and Archives Canada, 2009
ISBN 978-2-550-56495-9 (print version)
ISBN 978-2-550-56496-6 (PDF)

Santé
et Services sociaux

Québec 

All rights reserved for all countries. Any reproduction whatsoever, translation or dissemination, in whole or in part, is prohibited unless authorized by Les Publications du Québec. However, reproduction in whole or in part for personal, non-commercial purposes is permitted solely in Québec, provided the source is mentioned.