

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  
quite annoying.

Québec 



# Did You Know

## that head lice...

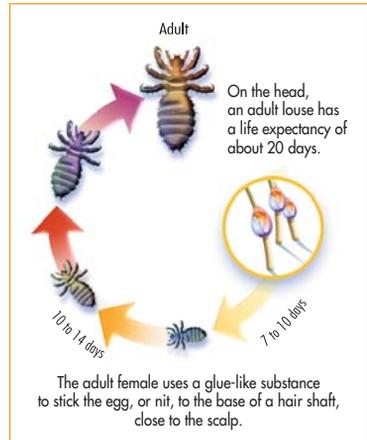
- do not always cause itching;
- are often found in children who go to school or to a child care centre, especially just after summer vacation;
- can affect anybody, rich or poor;
- are found in both clean and dirty hair;
- feed on human blood;
- are resistant to regular shampoos but can easily be eliminated 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 hard 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 (a magnifying glass can help).
- Look for lice and nits, especially behind the ears and near the back of the neck.



- **For short hair,**

it is preferable to comb through the hair from the back of the neck to the top of the head, making sure to scrape the scalp and to slide the nit comb from the roots to the ends of the hair, working through the entire head of hair.

- **For long hair,**

separate the hair into tufts and comb through each tuft, scraping the scalp and sliding the nit comb from the roots to the ends of the hair, working through the entire head of hair.

- 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;
- to 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 following products are recommended by the ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux:

### • 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. A medical prescription is recommended for pregnant or nursing women.

### • In case of failure of treatment with permethrin

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

These products can be used without restriction by pregnant or nursing women and for children under 2 years of age.

There are also other head lice products available on the market; however, their effectiveness has not been demonstrated in published studies.

### Side effects of the treatment:

**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 one 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 **two** 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<sup>R</sup> 1% (after shampooing)



1 Wash hair with a regular shampoo **that does not contain a conditioner** (or cream rinse). Rinse hair with clear water and dry with a towel.



2 Shake the bottle well.



4 Wait 10 minutes.



3 Apply 25 to 50 ml of the product on 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.



5 Rinse well with cool water over a bath tub or sink.



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



7 Comb through hair every day using a nit comb to check for live lice.

## Repeat the application after 7 to 10 days

To allow the head lice medication 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 on dry hair and massage thoroughly, in particular near the back of the neck and behind the ears.



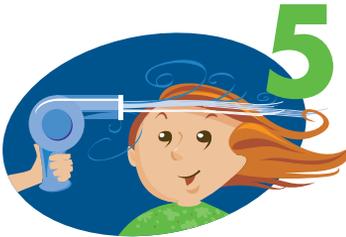
Wait 10 minutes (without diluting).



Gradually add water until a lather forms.



Rinse well with cool water over a bath tub 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 to check for live lice.

**Repeat the application after 7 to 10 days**

**Cost of treatment:** Around 10\$ for an individual-size bottle and 20\$ for a family-size bottle. The products are sold over the counter at your local drugstore.

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 drugstore. A comb is provided with certain head lice products.

## ● ● ● Removing nits

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

- Apply a **wet towel on the scalp** for at least 30 minutes to help dislodge the nits.
- **Comb through each tuft of hair with a nit comb:**
  - For short hair:** gently scrape the scalp with the comb and slide it along the hair from the roots to the ends.
  - For long hair:** take a tuft of hair, 2 cm wide. Using the nit comb, comb through hair in the opposite direction (towards the scalp), and then comb through normally (from the roots to the ends). Tufts of hair can be separated with hair clips or rubber bands, which should be discarded after use.
- 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

**Risk of infestation through contact with personal belongings is minimal, but if you receive a notice from the school or child care centre, follow these steps:**

- Treat personal belongings (bedclothes, combs, hairbrushes, hats, caps and other accessories) that are 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 fumigants 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.**

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](http://www.msss.gouv.qc.ca)

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