

Head Lice Policy

Head Lice Management Guidelines and Procedures

Head lice affect more children than all other communicable childhood diseases combined, excluding the common cold. The definitive diagnosis of head lice infestation requires the detection of a living louse. A live louse indicates active infestation. The presence of nits only indicates a past infestation that may or may not be currently active.

Head lice infestations, while irksome, are not a vector for spread of serious disease; nit misdiagnoses are common, the detection of nits close to the scalp is not associated with a high probability of live lice being present, and infestations may be asymptomatic

NO NIT POLICIES: Both the Canadian Pediatric Society and American Academy of Pediatrics agree that the evidence DOES NOT SUPPORT the use of "no-nit policies" for return to school or day-care. Therefore, school exclusion due to the detection of the presence of 'nits' does not have sound medical rationale

They recommend that children can return to school once treated with an effective shampoo.

ROUTINE SCREENING IN SCHOOLS: is no longer the standard of practice. The Canadian Pediatric Society and American Academy of Pediatrics found that these programs have NOT been shown to have a significant effect on the incidence of head lice in schools, and are not cost effective and should be discouraged.

Collingwood School nurses are actively involved in the education and prevention process and will make every effort to prevent and control head lice outbreaks through the following measures:

1. Parents are advised to make screening for head lice and nits part of their regular hygiene routine
2. When the nurse discovers lice or nits in a student's hair, the parents will be called to come and pick up the student .The nurse will:
 - a.) Give verbal and written instructions to the parent on appropriate treatment and prevention: shampoo student and all infected family members as soon as possible and repeat per instructions on the over-the-counter or prescription head lice shampoo, or as directed by a physician.
 - b.) Assist the parent how to identify and eliminate nits.
 - c.) Parents' are encouraged to tie back long hair and discourage head to head contact
 - d.) Re-examine the student upon return to school and note treatment used.
 - e.) Perform follow-up screening as applicable.
 - f.) Inform either Wentworth School Nurse or Morven School Nurse of known contact cases for students on the other campus.
 - g.) Regular updates about increased cases of head lice will be provided throughout the school year as necessary. These will come in the form of notices on the Health Centre area of the Collingwood website, e-mails to all Collingwood families and/or PCR updates.

Special Note: Student may return to school after one shampoo treatment has been completed.

3. Education: Provide classroom, grade level and/or school wide information and instruction about lice prevention via use of literature, video, and/or health talks, etc., as appropriate. Assist teachers with precautions such as keeping coats and hats separated, cleaning head phones, and preventing students from sharing combs, brushes, hats, etc.