



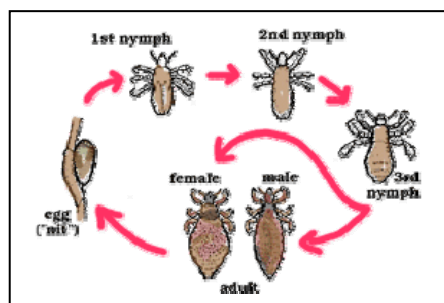
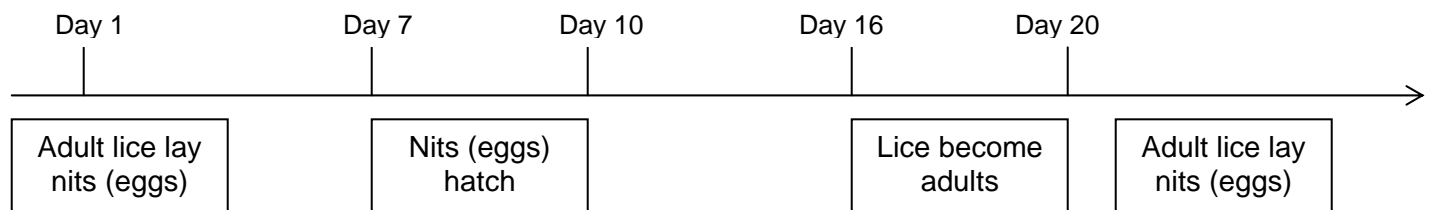
HEAD LICE FACTS

- Head lice is also called *pediculosis*.
- Head lice are not a major public health concern because they do not spread illness or disease.
- Head lice can be a bother because of the discomfort they can cause and how easily they are spread from person to person.

Some facts for you and your family to know:

- Head lice are tiny insects about the size of a sesame seed and live only on the human head.
- Head lice are not caused by being dirty. Anyone who has hair can get head lice.
- Head lice can move quickly on dry hair making them hard to see.
- Head lice do not jump or fly or swim.
- Head lice bites can make the scalp itchy but they do not cause disease.
- Adult head lice lay about 10 eggs (called nits) every day. These nits are stuck to the hair near the scalp. After the head lice hatch, the empty shell of the nit stays stuck to the hair.
- You can find lice anywhere on the head. Look behind the ears and the back of the neck.
- Lice can vary in colour from tan, brown or gray.
- You cannot get rid of lice with a hair brush or with a hair dryer.
- You can get head lice by touching heads with someone who has head lice, or by sharing combs, brushes, hats, headsets or helmets.
- Head lice are common where children play or work closely together.
- The best way to find head lice is by using a fine toothed lice comb on hair that is wet or wet with conditioner.
- Only treat when you find a live louse on the head.
- CHECK HEADS WEEKLY!

Life Cycle of Head Lice



OPTION A: HEAD LICE SHAMPOO

(Special head lice shampoos and rinses are used because they have been tested and deemed to be a safe and effective treatment)



Kill the Head Lice and Remove the Nits

This option involves using two (or three) treatments with a special head lice shampoo or cream rinse, 7 to 10 days apart. This special shampoo or cream rinse is available without a prescription at any pharmacy. The shampoo or cream rinse kills the head lice on the head but may not kill the nits. The nits need to be removed from the hair using a special “nit” comb and by using your fingernails. Resistance and or re-infestation can occur, and if it does, consult your Public Health Nurse.

ASK YOUR PHARMACIST ABOUT HEAD LICE SHAMPOOS AND CREAM RINSES

STEPS TO FOLLOW

DO	REMEMBER
1. <u>Check the heads</u> of all household members. Using a fine toothed lice comb, check the entire head, especially behind ears and back of neck. You are looking for live lice.	1. If one person in a house has head lice, there is a good chance that other household members have head lice too.
2. <u>Treat</u> infested household members at the same time. Read and follow the directions on the head lice shampoo or cream rinse carefully.	2. Unless you treat all infested household members, head lice can be passed on from one person to another when heads touch.
3. <u>Remove all dead lice and nits</u> using a nit comb or use your fingers to pull nits from the single strands of hair. Rinse nit comb or fingers in a sink or bowl of warm water and wipe dry after each stroke.	3. Metal and plastic nit combs are available at your local pharmacy. If the nit comb tugs the hair, try untangling the hair with a wide tooth comb first and then try the nit comb again.
4. <u>Wash</u> clothing worn in the past 2 – 3 days, bed sheets and pillowcases and place in <u>hot</u> cycle of the dryer <u>or</u> put the items in a sealed plastic bag for 10 days.	4. There is no reason to do a major clean up of the house to get rid of head lice. Only items that have been in direct contact with the affected person need to be washed, such as shirts, jackets, hats, combs, brushes.
5. <u>Treat a second time</u> 7 – 10 days after the first treatment. Repeat steps 2 and 3 above. - a third treatment is optional.	5. A second treatment will make sure that any head lice which hatch after the first treatment will be killed before they have a chance to lay any eggs. Two treatments and a follow-up check of the head with nit removal is the best way to make sure head lice are gone.

For further information, please contact the public health on call nurse at 604-983-6714.

For more information contact:

Health Link BC: **dial 811** to speak to a nurse (24/7), a dietitian or a pharmacist
(www.HealthLinkBC.ca)

OPTION B: WET COMBING

(A non-chemical way to find and eliminate head lice)



Remove the Head Lice & Nits

Wet combing is based on the life cycle of head lice. It is about removing the live head lice and nits from the head. Combing treatments are done every 3 – 4 days over a two-week period. This breaks the life cycle of head lice by removing them before they are fully grown and able to lay more eggs. This option is low cost and safe but takes time and requires that the steps below be followed carefully and completely. Talk to your Public Health Nurse if you need more information.

STEPS TO FOLLOW

DO	REMEMBER
1. <u>Wash</u> hair with normal shampoo and rinse.	1. Note: On average, a wet combing session takes about ½ hour per person.
2. <u>Apply</u> at least ½ cup of normal conditioner (any brand) to cover and wet all of the hair. Do not rinse out the conditioner.	2. Untangle hair with a regular wide tooth comb. Wet conditioner will stop the lice from moving around as quickly.
3. <u>Comb</u> sections of hair using a fine toothed lice comb. Divide hair into small sections. Firmly draw the comb from the scalp to the end of the hair. After each stroke, check the comb for lice. Rinse the comb in a sink or bowl of warm water, and wipe dry. Continue section by section until the entire head is done. Make sure hair stays wet with conditioner during combing.	3. Metal or plastic nit combs are available at your local pharmacy. If the comb tugs the hair, use a wide toothed comb first and more conditioner, then try the nit comb again.
4. <u>Rinse hair.</u> Leave hair dripping wet. Repeat Step 3 combing without conditioner, until no lice are found.	4. Check the comb and your fingernails for head lice (you do not want to put any lice back in the hair).
5. <u>Wash</u> clothing worn in the past 2 – 3 days, bed sheets and pillowcases and place in hot cycle of the dryer or put the items in a sealed plastic bag for 10 days.	5. There is no reason to do a major clean up of the house to get rid of head lice. Only items that have been in direct contact with the affected person need to be washed, such as shirts, jackets, hats, combs, brushes and pillowcases.
6. <u>Repeat</u> Steps 1 – 4 every three or four days for two weeks.	6. Follow the schedule below.

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DAYS TO WET COMB

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14