

# HEAD LICE TREATMENTS

## SYMPTOMS & PREVENTION

## IMPORTANT FACTS ABOUT LICE

## AVOIDING HEAD LICE AT CAMP

### TALK TO YOUR DOCTOR:

- if you are pregnant or breastfeeding
- before treating children under the age of two
- if a person has a seizure disorder
- if the skin of the scalp has an infection



### TALK TO YOUR PHARMACIST

There are many products available at your pharmacy

- Buy a head lice shampoo or cream rinse from your drug store.
- Apply as instructed. Misuse and overuse could be hazardous.
- The products kill the head lice and many eggs, but **a second treatment is needed 7 to 10 days after the first treatment to kill any newly hatched lice before they mature.**



### REMOVE ALL NITS BY USING FINGERNAILS OR A NIT COMB

- It is suggested that you limit shampoo use between the two treatments and in the week following the second treatment. This may allow the head lice product to work more effectively.
- Check head for live lice daily between treatments and remove any nits that are still present (do this in bright light)
  - head lice and nits are commonly found around ears, forehead and nape of neck - check these areas carefully
  - If live lice are found in the days following the first treatment, consult your pharmacist or call 416-338-7600
- Check all close contacts (i.e. family and friends)
- **There is conflicting information concerning whether or not all nits should be removed after the application of head lice products:**
- **Toronto Public Health recommends the removal of all nits as:**
  - head lice products are not 100% effective.
  - removal of nits may minimize the hatching of eggs that were not killed and the spread of young hatched lice to other heads.
  - it is easier to notice a new infestation if all nits are removed.

### IF A BABY OR WOMAN WHO IS PREGNANT OR BREASTFEEDING HAS HEAD LICE:

- Call your family doctor or Motherisk Program of the Hospital for Sick Children at 416-813-6780 for advice before choosing a head lice treatment product.
- If pregnant and treating others, wear plastic or rubber gloves and a face mask.

# HOUSE CLEANING?

- **You must wash in hot, soapy water:**
  - hats, scarves, hairbrushes, combs, hair ribbons, pillowcases, towels, bed linens, machine washable stuffed toys and coats
- Wash items after the first and second treatment
- Items that cannot be machine-washed should be dry cleaned or placed in an airtight bag for 10 days to two weeks
- Excessive house cleaning is not necessary but vacuum surfaces where heads have rested (i.e. sofas, seats of cars, sports helmets)
- **NEVER** use insecticide sprays



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# CONTROLLING THE SPREAD

- Discourage head-to-head contact and sharing of hats, scarves, hairbrushes, combs and hair ribbons
- Tie long hair back in braids
- Check heads of all family members and people in close contact
- All family members with head lice should be treated at the same time
- Check young school age children weekly for head lice; more often if there is an outbreak
- If you find lice or nits present on your child's head:
  - Tell all close contacts to check their head
  - Tell the child's teacher and/or day care worker

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# IMPORTANT THINGS TO REMEMBER

- Lack of cleanliness does not cause head lice
- Both children and adults can get it
- Short hair does not prevent the spread
- Lice do not live on cats, dogs or other animals
- You cannot prevent head lice by using head lice shampoos or products - use only if lice are present and as directed
- **Be sensitive to your child's feelings!**

