



Procedure HS - #2

Title: **PEDICULOSIS (HEAD LICE)**

Adopted: June 2, 2009

Revised: August 2016, November 2019, March 2023

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**Purpose:**

The purpose of this procedure is to provide guidelines for the management of students with pediculosis

**Background:**

1. Under the Ontario Public Health Standards 2008 (revised May 1, 2014), there is no requirement/ mandate for health units to address head lice infestations. Pediculosis is considered a nuisance, but not a health hazard. The following procedure is based on the policy outlined by Toronto Public Health (2015) and based on Canadian Paediatric Society recommendations. Overall, every effort should be made to destigmatize pediculosis.

**Procedures:**

2. Parents of children identified with head lice will be notified by the school of the fact by letter (Appendix A) including the Pediculosis Treatment Instruction Sheet (Appendix B) and will be asked to seek treatment for the child.
3. Children found to have head lice will not be pulled out of class to be sent home. The parent is not required to keep the child at home until the problem is cleared. Children will continue to receive instruction at school, with reasonable accommodations (e.g., well-spaced coat hook)
4. If a child continues to not be free of lice or nits, the parent is provided with a new Pediculosis Letter and Treatment Instruction Sheet, as in (2) above.
5. All parents of children in a class in which a student or students are found to have head lice will be sent a letter informing them of the fact (Pediculosis Class Letter – Appendix C). The letter contains a description of methods of observation and precautionary measures that can be taken in the home to monitor and treat head lice infestations.

6. The Principal may designate interested parents or community resource persons, who are available and trained to perform head lice checks in the school, to verify suspected cases of head lice and/or to recheck returning students. Where such a resource is offered, the Principal shall inform parents and the school council of the existence of this resource prior to designating these persons.
7. For Further Assistance - City of Toronto public health nurses are not responsible for performing head lice checks, nor can they be expected to provide training to parents individually on how to identify, remove and treat the nits. However, if there is a recurring problem with head lice infestation the public health nurse may be invited to a parent meeting to discuss strategies that may be useful in dealing with the situation.



## APPENDIX A - PEDICULOSIS NOTIFICATION LETTER

### PEDICULOSIS NOTIFICATION LETTER

Date:

Child's Name:

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Pediculosis (Head Lice) is a common problem in schools especially at certain times of the year. **Your child was found to have head lice or nits (eggs).** In order to ensure effective treatment, we ask that you follow the instructions on the enclosed Pediculosis Treatment Instruction Sheet. It is important that all lice and nits are removed. If all lice and nits are not removed, other children in the class, as well as your child will continue to be affected by the problem. Your child may return to school at any time, but preferably after the first treatment and after all nits are removed. If you have any questions, please contact the school.

Thank you for your co-operation,

Principal

## APPENDIX B - TREATMENT INSTRUCTION SHEET



### PEDICULOSIS TREATMENT INSTRUCTION SHEET

#### Head Lice

Lice are very small brown wingless insects. Their eggs, called nits, appear gray in dark hair and brown in light hair. They are oval shaped and stick to the side of the hair near the scalp.



nits on hair

#### Checking for Lice

If you notice signs such as frequent head scratching, check all family members at least once a week. Only treat people who have lice or nits.



#### How to Treat Head Lice

Lice treatments and lice combs are available at your local drugstore. If the person with lice or nits has allergies, asthma, epilepsy or other medical conditions, please consult your pharmacist or doctor. If you or the person with lice or nits is pregnant or nursing, please phone Motherisk at (416) 813-6780.

#### Lice magnified

Below are two ways to get rid of head lice. In both treatments, you will have to remove nits from the hair by hand

#### Commercial Treatments

- Shampoo your child's hair according to the instructions.
- Separate the hair into sections and remove all the nits with the lice comb and your fingernails. Shampoos alone will not get rid of nits.
- To help loosen the eggs rinse the hair with a mixture of warm water (1/2) and vinegar (1/2).
- Treating head lice requires two treatments one week apart.
- Each day for a month, inspect the hair for lice and nits.

#### Vinegar and Oil Treatments

- Mix equal parts of vinegar and oil (mineral oil, baby oil, cooking oil).
- Apply to dry hair and rub well.
- Cover the hair in plastic wrap for 2-3 hours.
- Wash hair with regular shampoo.
- Separate the hair into sections and remove all the nits with the lice comb and your fingernails. To help loosen the eggs rinse the hair with a mixture of warm water (1/2) and vinegar (1/2).
- Repeat this treatment five times every three days for 15 days.

#### What Else Can I Do?

It is a good idea to put bed linen, clothes and stuffed toys in a hot dryer or wash them in hot water. Do not use chemical sprays in your home as part of the treatment. They are dangerous and totally unnecessary.

#### Returning to School

Your child may return to school at any time, but preferably after the first treatment and after all nits are removed. If you have any questions, please contact the school.

## APPENDIX C- CLASS LETTER



To: Parents/Guardians

**Re: Pediculosis (Head Lice)**

A case of Pediculosis has been found to exist in your child's classroom. Pediculosis is an infestation of head lice or head lice eggs (called "nits") which is spread by direct contact with an infested person and, indirectly, by contact with that person's personal belongings. These include clothing, combs, brushes, and head gear. Toronto Public Health does not consider head lice to be a health hazard, but rather considered a nuisance.

We ask that you take the following precautions:

1. Inspect your child's hair and scalp frequently for the next ten (10) days. The louse may be brown or greyish, with a flat wingless body 2 – 3 mm in length. It has six legs. The eggs may be yellow, brown, or white teardrop shaped, are glued to the hair near the scalp and are called "nits." It is usually the eggs which are first noticed.
2. If your child complains of an itchy scalp, you should check for lice and/or nits.
3. If you discover your child has lice or nits, please notify the school right away. We will send you a Treatment Instruction sheet.
4. Please note that if the child is found to have pediculosis, the parent or guardian is *not* required to keep the child at home until the child is free of all head lice and nits.

Thank you.

Principal