

# My child got a note in their backpack about head lice, what do I do?

Relax! Don't panic, everything will be just fine.

Does the note say that *your child* has head lice or that a child *in their class* has head lice? Read the note carefully. Either way, this is what you need to know.

## About Head Lice (Pediculosis)

The head louse is an insect that lives and breeds on your head. They are very common in school-age children. According to Toronto Public Health, 6- 12 million people are infected with head lice worldwide each year. Lice spread directly through head to head contact and indirectly by contact personal belongings (e.g. clothing, hats and hair accessories). In order to control the spread of lice, we ask that you take the following precautions:

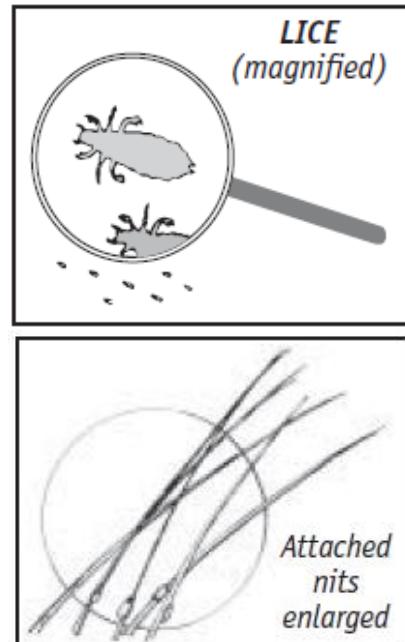
### 1. IDENTIFY

Please check your children regularly and treat immediately.

**Use a bright light and look at the "hot" zone (nape of neck, behind the ears, along hairline).**

Inspect your child's hair and scalp frequently. If notified of cases in your child's class, please check your child for the following 10 days. The louse (crawling bugs) may be brown or grayish, with a flat, wingless body 1-2 mm in length with six legs. You are less likely to see an actual louse.

What you are more likely to find are eggs. The eggs may be yellow, brown, or white teardrop-shaped, are glued to the hair near the scalp and are often called "nits". Nits are usually found within an inch or two of the scalp, and attached firmly to the hair shaft (you need to use your finger nails to remove it from the hair). Nits attach to one side of the hair shaft only – matter surrounding the hair completely is likely hair conditioner or other debris.



### 2. NOTIFY

NOTIFY the School of NEW OUTBREAK

- Call the school immediately **(416) 393-9055** and report the following "My child has a confirmed case of lice/nits, please notify Ms. Smith's class in room 101."
- You may do this anonymously.
- The school will send out a notice to the class on the day it is reported BUT THEY NEVER IDENTIFY SPECIFIC CHILDREN. Any notification from the school only states that there has been a case or cases of head lice in a specific class.
- If your child attends a daycare or an afterschool program with close contact (Guides, etc.), please inform these organizations as well.

### 3. TREAT

- There are many lice treatment options. Home treatments are available at local pharmacies, but speak with your Pharmacist for advice before buying specific products. You may also elect to go to a professional lice treatment center or have professionals come to your home.

Some professionals include:

Nitworks	<a href="http://www.nitworks.ca">www.nitworks.ca</a>	416 -781- 4545
Nitwits	<a href="http://www.nitwits.ca">www.nitwits.ca</a>	416-546-4455
The Lice People	<a href="http://www.thelicepeople.com">www.thelicepeople.com</a>	416-700-7434
The Lice Squad	<a href="http://www.licesquad.com">www.licesquad.com</a>	1-888-542-3778
Toronto Head Lice Removal	<a href="http://www.torontoheadliceremoval.com">www.torontoheadliceremoval.com</a>	416-616-9624

- If treating at home, apply product and comb hair in all directions, section by section, until the comb comes out clean with no nits, lice, etc. If any nits remain, they will hatch and you will need to start all over again. It's all about the COMB!!

Note: While most lice shampoos claim to kill lice *and* nits, most are not 100% effective at treating nits. Cheap, plastic combs will not be effective either. Where possible use a 'terminator'-style comb (retail about \$25) to make sure all nits are removed.

Combs are available at most professional lice treatment centers as well as many hair salons, including Melonhead in Bloor West Village.



- Please keep your child at home until he/she is free of all lice and nits. Your child must be examined by the VP and cleared before returning to class.

### 4. REPEAT

- After initial treatment, comb your child's hair every 3 days for 3 weeks to ensure your child's head is clear of nits and prevent further infestation.
- Consider re-treating with shampoo after 7-10 days to kill any newly hatched lice *before* they mature.
- Combing takes only 15 minutes if done correctly and is easiest with wet hair that has been conditioned.

### 5. HOME

Once you've IDENTIFIED, NOTIFIED, TREATED, here are some things you should consider doing in your home:

- Wash exposed bedding and run through hot dryer.
- Wash soft toys, and other household items that may house lice. Stuffed toys can be put through the hot dryer for 20 minutes and non-washable items can be sealed in bags for a week.
- Vacuum soft surfaces including car seats.
- Keep combs and brushes separated and check all family members regularly.
- Don't wait for class notices; check your child's hair on a regular basis.
- Keep long hair tied back.

### 6. EDUCATE YOUR CHILD

- Lice are very common and can happen to anyone.
- Keep your belongings to yourself (Don't share hats, scarves, etc.).
- No teasing... head lice are very common and are not caused by poor hygiene. Getting lice isn't anyone's fault.