

Head Lice Information Update December 8, 2011

Over the last few weeks there has been a significant increase in the outbreak of Pediculosis (Head Lice) within our Board and the Halton Catholic District School Board in the Halton Region. To deal with this increase, our service provider, We Care, has added additional staffing for each area of the region i.e. Burlington, Milton/Halton Hills, and Oakville. For your reference we have included information (see below) about Pediculosis (Head Lice).

Parents can also access information on Pediculosis (Head Lice) at <http://www.halton.ca/cms/One.aspx?portalId=8310&pageId=30565><http://www.halton.ca/cms/One.aspx?portalId=8310&pageid=30565>

HOW TO PREVENT SPREAD OF HEAD LICE:

- Check your child's hair carefully once a week for lice and eggs. They are hard to see.
- Teach your child to brush/comb their hair every night using their own hairbrush.
- Braid long hair or put into ponytail. Children having sleepovers should bring their own pillow and bedding.

WHAT ARE HEAD LICE? Head lice are tiny, wingless, grayish brown insects which live and breed in human hair. They move quickly when you part the hair and are hard to see. **The eggs** are half the size of a pinhead, (.08 mm), oval in shape and grey to brown in colour. The tiny eggs are glued firmly to the hair. Newly laid eggs are **very close** to the scalp. The warmth at the scalp will hatch them in about 7 – 10 days.

WHAT YOU NEED TO DO:

- Talk to a pharmacist. Ask for a product that kills head lice and their eggs. Ask if there are any special precautions to take while using the product. Some products may not be recommended for young children, people with certain allergies or pregnant and nursing mothers.
- If unsure, please check with your doctor.
- Also ask your doctor regarding treatment for the following persons:
 1. for treatment of children under the age of two;
 2. for persons with a seizure disorder;
 3. if lice are discovered on eyebrows, eyelashes or beard;
 4. if the skin of the scalp is broken or infected;
 5. for pregnant or breast feeding mothers.
- Only treat family members who **have** head lice.
- Follow the product directions **exactly**. Never use these products on a daily basis,
- Wear plastic or rubber gloves when using the product so you won't expose your hands to the chemical for too long. Wash your hands well, immediately after using the head lice product.
- Hold a towel tightly over the eyes to protect them from the product during treatment.
- Rinse hair under the tap instead of in the shower or tub, to limit skin exposure and prevent swallowing some of the product.
- **Store** any unused products out of the reach of children.

IMPORTANT:

- **Remove all live lice** from the hair using fingers, nit comb or brush. For long hair brush hair from the scalp downward and then with head bent forward, brush hair from the nape of the neck upward to the scalp.
- Sit by bright natural light to see the eggs.
- Take hold of a lock of hair and **manually pull eggs** from the hair because nit combs will not reach the new eggs that are laid close to the scalp.
- Using your thumbnail against your first finger, strip the eggs from the root of the hair down to the tips. (Place eggs in a paper towel for the garbage.)
- Pin back that lock of hair and continue until **all the eggs are removed**.
- **Especially make sure** you remove the eggs that are close to the scalp.
- Ask the pharmacist when the second treatment should be done.
- Routine household cleaning is sufficient. Spraying of household items is not necessary and can be harmful.

WHEN YOUR CHILD COMES HOME WITH HEAD LICE THEN WHAT:

- **Remember to tell** the school or child care centre about the head lice.
- **Remember to tell** anyone who has had close contact with the person in your family who has head lice.
- Ask your **school** or **child care centre** about the procedure for re-entry to the school or centre. **Families can phone We Care (1-866-877-8688) to locate a nurse the next day or take their child to a medical practitioner, e.g. physician, walk-in clinic, for a recheck. The family will be responsible for any costs associated with this rechecking.**
- **Continue to check** your child's head once a week, after school breaks, sleepovers and vacations. Head lice can spread anytime heads are close together. **Your child can get head lice again! Please do not share hairbrushes.**