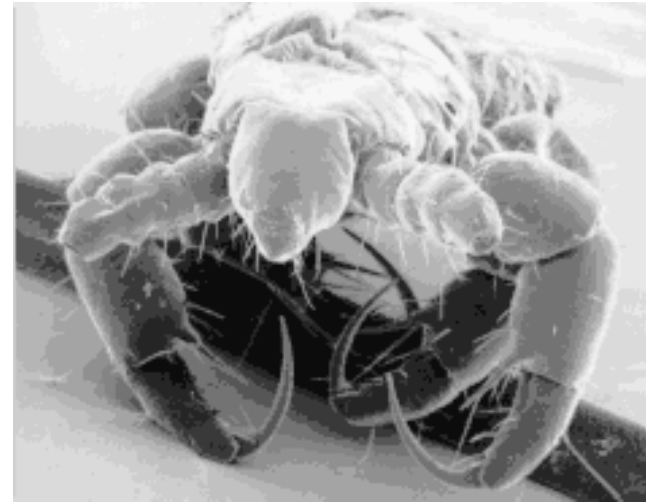




Head Lice: What You Should Know

Information for Schools and
Families

Head Lice Are Here To Stay!



One female louse plus 30 days equals 100 baby lice!



Head Lice

- Are tiny insects about the size of a sesame seed
- Have six claws that are used to "cling" to a hair shaft
- Are tan, brown or grey in color
- Can only live on a human head



Head Lice

- Can move fast and are hard to see
- Do not jump, fly or swim - they just crawl
- Are very common and occur in people of all ages, races and classes
- Are most common in school-aged children



Head Lice

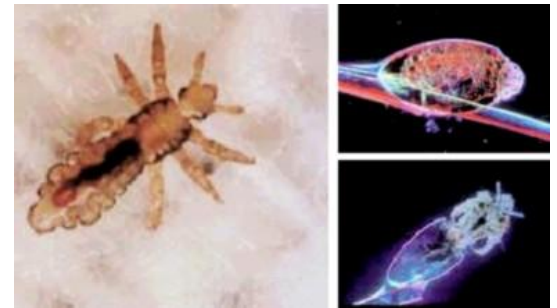


- Are spread by close head-to-head contact
- May be spread by sharing items such as hats, helmets and hair brushes
- Feed by 'biting' the scalp



Head Lice

- Bites can itch
- A person can have head lice and not know it
- Head lice eggs are called "nits"
- Nits stick to the shaft of the hair
- They are white or beige



Head Lice DO NOT
cause disease



Managing Head Lice



Treat the Lice and Take care of the Child!



- **Reassure**

- Comfort and support the child and family

- **Normalize**

- Mind your language
- Be aware of your personal reactions



Treat the Lice and Take care of the Child!

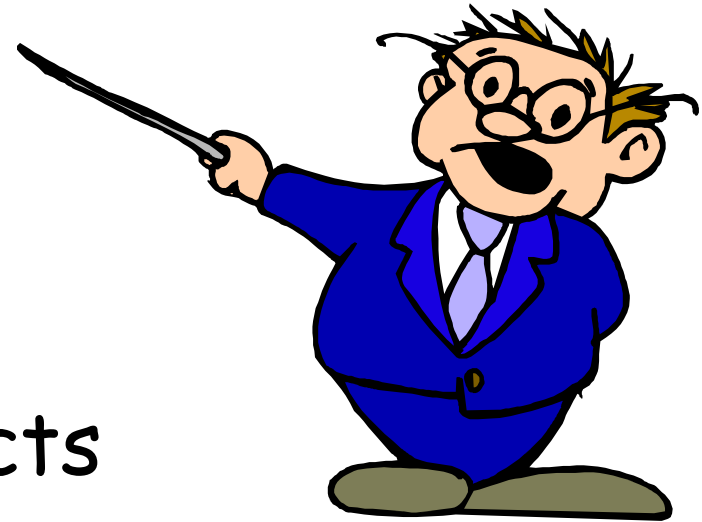


- **Normalize**

- Accept reality

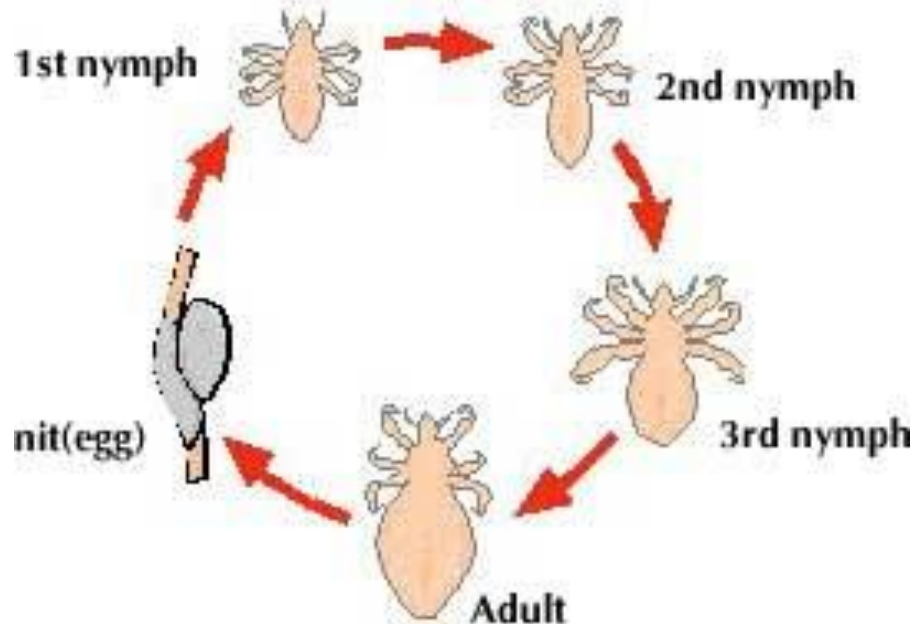
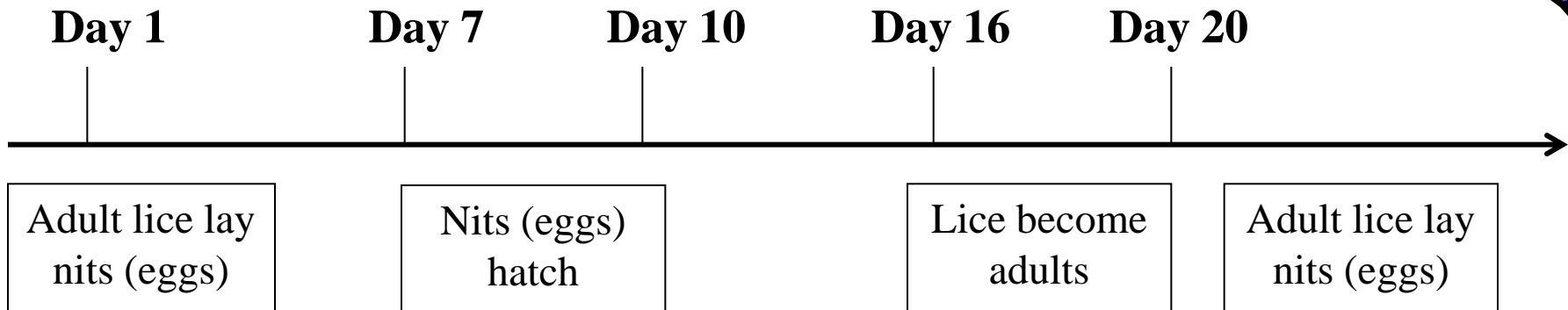
- **Inform**

- Dispel the myths
- Reinforce the facts



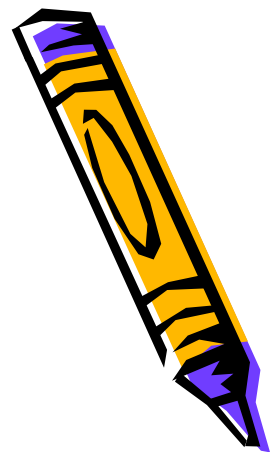
Life Cycle of Head Lice

An adult louse can lay up to 10 nits a day!



Managing Head Lice: 2 Approved Treatments

- (1) Pediculicides - chemical shampoo or cream rinse that kills lice and sometimes nits. Still need to wet comb to remove nits.



Managing Head Lice: 2 Approved Treatments



(1) Pediculicides: Insecticides are chemicals that kill insects (bugs). In Canada, 3 insecticides are approved to treat head lice:

- Pyrethrin (found in R&C Shampoo + Conditioner)
- Permethrin (Nix Creme Rinse or Kwellada-P Creme Rinse)
- Lindane (Hexit Shampoo or PMS-Lindane Shampoo).

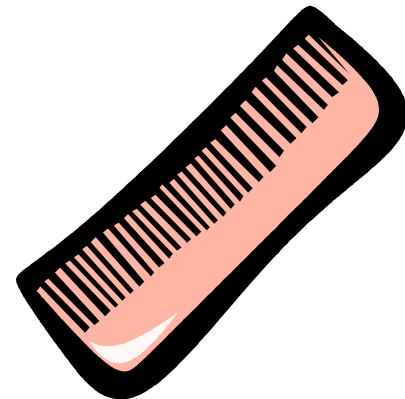
Pyrethrin and permethrin are safe when used on humans. However, lindane can be toxic (poisonous). **Products with lindane should not be used on infants or young children younger than 2 years of age.** You don't need a prescription for these products.



Managing Head Lice: 2 Approved Treatments



(2) Wet Combing - manual removal of live lice and nits by using a nit comb. It works best when done on a 2 week cycle (days 1, 5, 9 and 13).



Managing Head Lice: 2 Approved Treatments



(2) Wet Combing - 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.

DAYS TO WET COMB

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



Managing Head Lice: 2 Approved Treatments



Alternative treatments have not been proven to be effective and can sometimes be toxic.



Exclusion from School for Head Lice is Not Necessary



- "No-Nit" and school exclusion policies have **not** been shown to be effective in managing head lice (Canadian Pediatric Society)
- There is **no medical reason** to exclude a child from school



Exclusion from School for Head Lice is Not Necessary

- Head lice should not keep a child from learning and being successful in school
- Many children miss a lot of school due to head lice



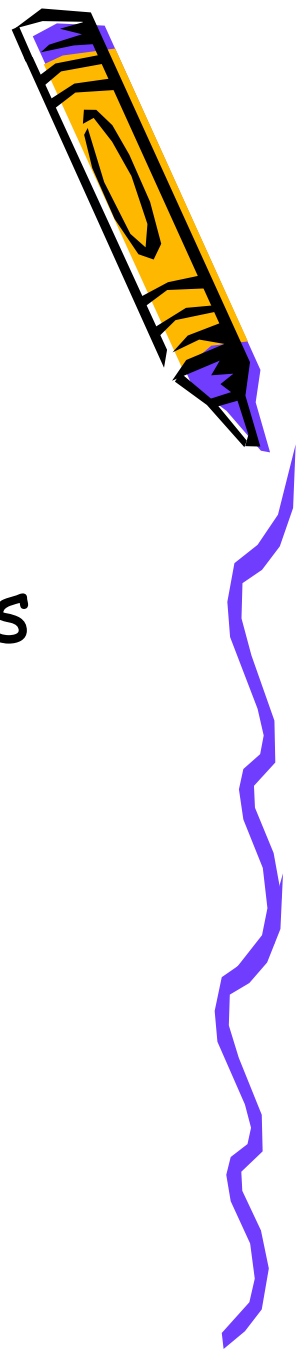
Routine Screening for Lice is **NOT** recommended

- Routine classroom head checks have not been shown to prevent or reduce cases of head lice
- Routine classroom head checks students away from learning activities



Routine Screening for Lice is NOT recommended

- Routine classroom head checks take staff, parents and volunteers away from learning activities
- Misidentification is common



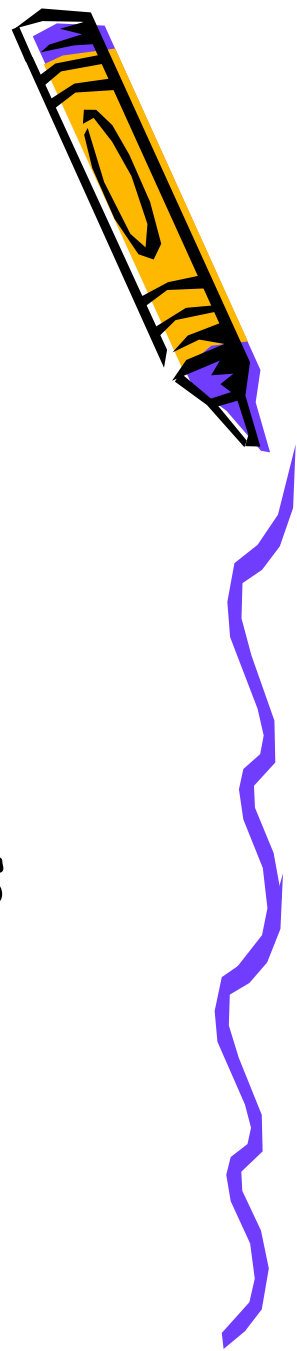
Managing Head Lice at Home



- Know the facts about head lice
- Teach children not to share hats, scarves, helmets
- Choose treatment options that work for the family and follow through with them



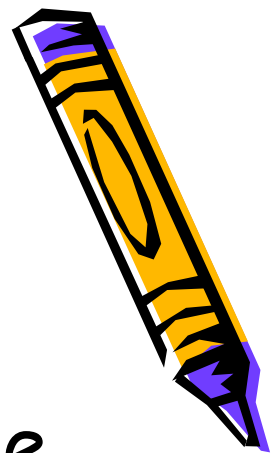
Managing Head Lice at Home



- Check the heads of every member of the household when there has been head lice found in a close contact
- Treat only the household members who have head lice with a recommended treatment



Managing Head Lice at Home



- Help reduce the stigma of head lice
- Check children's heads regularly



Managing Head Lice at School

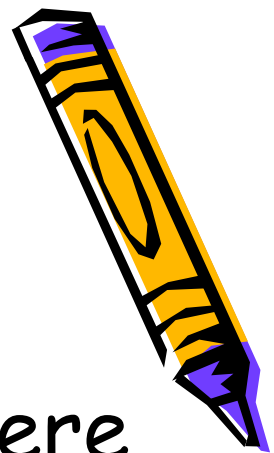


- Know the facts about head lice
- Promote head lice awareness in regular newsletters or on bulletin boards
- Use the school head lice package in the C&Y Program School Health Manual (online or from the school PHN)



Managing Head Lice at School

- Communicate with parents when there is a case of head lice in the classroom using letters and handouts in the C&Y School Manual
- Help reduce the stigma of head lice





Head lice are here to
stay, but they can be
managed!



How to Check for Head Lice



- Find a comfortable well-lit area.
- Use a fine toothed (lice) comb. Wet the hair and put conditioner in it (do not rinse).
- Divide the hair into small sections and comb from the base of the scalp to the ends of the hair.



How to Check for Head Lice



- First comb the hair at the back of the neck, behind the ears and above the forehead. Then, check the rest of the head.
- Look for live lice on the comb. A light colored towel or tissue can be used to wipe the comb.



How to Check for Head Lice



- If you find a louse, check all household members. Treat only those who have head lice. If you find nits only, check for a few consecutive days and again a week later.

If you do not find lice, check again in a few days. To find head lice early, it is a good idea to check the child regularly for head lice.



Help from the Public Health Nurse



- Provide schools with head lice resources
- Act as a resource for information about the management of head lice. This may include speaking to parent groups or at staff meetings.
- Support staff, parents and other caregivers to manage head lice.





Note: Public health nurses do not perform individual or mass head checks

