



## Tips for Schools Dealing With Head Lice

1. Send home head lice information and school district policy information early in the school year. This health file is a good basic handout to share with parents: <http://www.healthlinkbc.ca/healthfiles/hfile06.stm> and this is a good link to share: <http://www.interiorhealth.ca/YourHealth/SchoolHealth/HeadLice/Pages/default.aspx> Note: outbreaks often occur after school holidays like Christmas and March break.
2. Stay calm... head lice are a nuisance, but do not cause disease, and remember lice do not jump, they can only crawl. Consider asking your school PHN to come in and offer an education session on preventing and managing head lice to children, parents and staff of the school.
3. Teach about head lice in the classrooms so that children can understand head lice and what they can do to help prevent the spread of it. The information under head lice treatment options may be helpful: <http://www.interiorhealth.ca/YourHealth/SchoolHealth/HeadLice/Pages/default.aspx>
4. Encourage children with long hair to tie it back or braid it. Have hair elastics available in the classroom. Do not reuse these with different kids.
5. Avoid head-to-head contact common during play and buddy-work. Do everything in your power to keep heads from touching.
6. Take a look at the locker room/coat hanging situation. If the coats/hats are side by side touching, look at alternative options i.e. hanging on every other hook or bagging coats and hanging the bags. Maybe coats need to be kept in back packs. Teach children to place hats and scarves inside their coat or jacket sleeves.
7. Remind kids not to try on other people's hats, scarves, coats, and sports uniforms, tell them not to share combs, brushes, hair ornaments, or towels.
8. Keep kids upright! Do not have them lie on couches, pillows, carpets, or stuffed animals that may have recently been in contact with an infected person.
9. Avoid sharing costumes and headgear/helmets. Use disposable shower caps or liners when headgear/helmets must be worn by different children. If headgear must be shared, it should be cleaned and disinfected with a suitable product or rubbing alcohol before being issued to other students.
10. Encourage parents to check their children regularly (weekly) for head lice. <http://www.interiorhealth.ca/YourHealth/SchoolHealth/HeadLice/Pages/default.aspx> has a handout on **how to check for lice**. Consider purchasing some treatment supplies like good quality lice combs and conditioner to loan to families with financial issues. Some treatment options are better than others; speak to your school nurse.