

Head Lice Tips for Schools

1. Send home head lice information and school district policy information early in the school year. The following information can be shared with parents in school newsletters:

[Head Lice | HealthLink BC](#)

[School Health Care | Infant & Youth Health | IH](#)

2. Keep in mind that **school is an unlikely source of transmission** of head lice. Much more common are family members, overnight guests and playmates that spend a lot of time together. That is why head lice outbreaks are so common after school holidays like summer break, Christmas and March break.
3. Stay calm... head lice are a nuisance, but do not cause disease, and remember lice do not jump, they can only crawl. Head lice are actually harder to get than a cold, flu, pink eye or strep throat! 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.
4. 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. This information on the Interior Health Public Website under [head lice treatment options](#) may be helpful: [School Health Care | Infant & Youth Health | IH](#)
5. Teach children to place hats and scarves inside their coat sleeves or back pack.
6. Take a look at the place where children hang their coats. If the coats are side by side touching, look at alternative options i.e. hanging on every other hook or bagging coats.
7. Lice are spread by head-to-head contact common during play and buddy-work. Do everything in your power to keep heads from touching.
8. 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 children.
9. Remind children not to try on other people's hats, scarves, coats, and sports uniforms, tell them not to share combs, brushes, hair ornaments, or towels.
10. Keep children upright! Do not have them lie on couches, pillows, carpets, or stuffed animals that may have recently been in contact with an infested person.
11. Avoid sharing costumes and headgear/helmets. Use disposable shower caps or liners when headgear/helmets must be worn by different children or clean and disinfected headgear with a suitable product before being issued to other students.

12. Don't think all head scratching is caused by lice. Only 50 % of people with lice actually scratch their heads (scratching is caused by a reaction to lice saliva). A true case of head lice is diagnosed by finding live lice. It's very easy to mistake common hair debris for nits (lice eggs).
 13. Encourage parents to check their children regularly (weekly) for head lice. Information about "How to Check for Head Lice" can be found on the Interior Health website: [School Health Care | Infant & Youth Health | IH](#)
 14. Consider purchasing some treatment supplies like good quality metal lice combs to help out those families who have financial issues. Some treatment options are better than others; speak to your school nurse and see "Treatment Options Handout" at: [School Health Care | Infant & Youth Health | IH](#)
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