

HEAD LICE (NITS)

IN TASMANIAN GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION
learners first



Did you know?

As parents or carers, you have the primary responsibility for detecting and treating head lice.

If your child has head lice, you must treat your child with a recommended treatment. Your child may return to school after treatment has begun.

What are head lice?

- Head lice have been around for thousands of years. Anyone can get head lice. It doesn't mean you are dirty or have dirty hair; head lice don't care whether hair is clean or dirty.
- Head lice are small, wingless, blood sucking insects. Their colour varies from whitish-brown to reddish-brown. Head lice only survive on humans. If isolated from the head they die very quickly (usually within 24 hours).
- People get head lice from direct head to head contact with another person who has head lice. Head lice do not have wings or jumping legs so they cannot fly or jump from head to head. They can only crawl.

Where to start

To help prevent the spread of head lice, we ask that you:

- Notify your child's school as soon as you detect head lice or nits in your child's hair
- Take advice as to the best treatment for your child and family and follow the pharmacist's instruction.

What your school will do

- The school will notify you if there is reason to believe your child has head lice.
- The school will notify parents if there are known cases of head lice in a particular class and ask parents to check their children's hair.
- The school will **not** administer treatment to your child.

Tips

- The lice themselves are hard to spot, but look out for brown or grey insects about the size of a match head that lurk at the roots of your child's hair.
- A nit will not easily come off the hair but dandruff will.
- Teach your child not to share brushes, combs, hats, swimming caps or hair bands.
- Braid long hair, or tie it back while your child is at school.

Where can I get more information?

- A pharmacist or doctor.
- Talk to your child's teacher or principal.
- Visit the Department of Education website: www.education.tas.gov.au
- Visit the Department of Health and Human Services website: www.dhhs.tas.gov.au

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