



Head lice are in our midst! (3)

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Dear parents, do not worry!

Head lice have shared our lives, unfortunately all too faithfully, for a very long time. They are small parasites that only survive on the heads of human beings. They lay eggs, known as nits, which they attach to hairs. In our part of the world, head lice are not known to have a deleterious effect on health, except for causing itching and occasionally, as a result of excessive scratching, secondary skin infection.

Head lice are to be found worldwide, and anyone can get them! Personal hygiene or cleanliness has nothing to do with the spread of head lice. Unfortunately, they reproduce very rapidly, and spread by head-to-head contact, particularly from one child to another. Thus, in cases of infestation, we must get rid of them as quickly as possible in order to avoid their propagation.

Therefore, we invite you, as a parent, to **check your child's hair regularly**, as well as that of all household members.

If your child has no lice, there is no need to take any preventive action.

If you discover that your child — or another family member — has head lice, **don't panic!**

This is what you have to do:

- Contact your paediatrician, family doctor or pharmacist to obtain **anti-lice medication** and a **fine-toothed nit comb**.
- **Follow the instructions** supplied with the anti-lice medication very closely, paying special attention to how long it should be left on the hair.
- Once the hair has been washed, apply a conditioner and, using the **fine-toothed nit comb**, comb it conscientiously, lock by lock, to get rid of lice and nits effectively.
- **Repeat this procedure** as directed in the product's instructions (generally speaking, after one week).

If your child has a health problem, for instance, an allergy, eczema, asthma, etc., or is suffering from a scalp infection, consult your health provider before commencing treatment.

It is also most important **to inform your child's class teacher**, and where relevant, the half-way centre or Maison Relais, so that they can take the necessary measures, as recommended by the Ministry of Health and Social security, to halt head lice propagation as quickly as possible.

Your School Socio-Medical Team will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Thank you for your kind co-operation.