

# Pediculosis (Head Lice)

Your child has possibly been in contact with pediculosis (head lice) at school.

## What are head lice?

- It is commonly found in most schools and daycare centers, especially after summer vacation
- It does NOT always cause itching
- It is found in all social classes – rich and poor
- It is found as much in clean hair as it is in dirty hair
- It is resistant to regular shampooing
- It is caused by an unpleasant parasite that does not transmit disease

## How are they transmitted?

- Lice are transmitted from one person to another by direct head to head contact, like a hug for example
- Lice are NOT easily spread through contact with personal belongings such as hats, combs, hairbrushes or pillowcases, or through contact with the back of sofas, or with sheets, carpets, eyeglasses, etc.

## What are lice?

They are insects as big as the head of a needle, grey in colour, with no wings:

- They live near the hair root and can sometimes be found on eyebrows or beards
- They feed on human blood
- They do not live on pets
- They do not jump or fly
- The female can lay an average of 5 (nits) per day
- 

## What are nits?

- Nits cling to the hair shaft and are difficult to remove
- Live nits are grayish-white eggs that look like puffy, shiny and translucent dandruff flakes. They are usually found within 6 mm of the scalp
- Dead nits are whiter and dried out. They are mainly found more than 6 mm away from the scalp

## How can head lice be prevented?

- Check the child's head regularly, as well as the heads of other family members. Good lighting, a nit comb and a magnifying glass can help.
- Remind children to avoid head-to-head contact, keep hats, caps, and scarves in their coat sleeves, not to share personal items, such as combs, hairbrushes, barrettes and hats, and to keep long hair tied back.