

Head Lice (*Pediculus Capitis*), continued

- Prevent lice infestation.
 - ~ Encourage children not to share headgear, towels, and bedding.
 - ~ Soak combs and brushes in disinfectant solution (¼-cup bleach to 1 gallon of water) for at least 10 minutes. Soaking in pediculicide shampoo or hot water (130°F) for 5 minutes also works.
 - ~ Provide separate storage areas for each child's clothing so that the personal articles of one child do not touch the personal articles of another child (eg, widely placed hooks, non-touching laundry or plastic bags for personal items).

What are the roles of the caregiver/teacher and the family?

- Report the infection to staff designated by the child care program or school for decision making and action related to care of ill children. That person, in turn, alerts possibly exposed family members and staff to watch for symptoms.
- Have parents/guardians consult with a health professional for a treatment plan.
- Check children observed scratching their heads for lice; check all contacts.
- Educate caregivers/teachers and families how to recognize lice and nits.
- Implement other control measures listed here.

Exclude from group setting?

Yes

Readmit to group setting?

- * Lice are under treatment and all nits are removed

Comments

- No-nit policies requiring children to be nit-free are not recommended because they may keep the child out of the program needlessly and unduly burden the child's parents/guardians who must implement this measure. Differences of opinion about no-nit policies are common.
- Education of families and caregivers/teachers about the relatively benign consequences of head lice infestations should be attempted to reduce the level of disruption for the infested child and all the others involved in the program. It may be necessary to arrange for a health professional to provide this education to overcome the widespread beliefs about this problem.

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