



Head Lice Policy

Policy

It is the hope of Riverside Childcare staff and Management that we can keep the Centre free from head lice. The beginning of a new school year is always the most prevalent time of year for head lice. We would ask that you be vigilant and check your child/children regularly. We also suggest the use of a tea tree oil shampoo or placing some tea tree oil on the collar of your child's clothes to help avoid infection. Preventative sprays are also available in your local chemist.

Procedure

1. If it is that a child/children in the centre has head lice we would ask that parents follow the HSE advice on ridding the child/children of the infection as set out below:

"Head lice can sometimes be difficult to treat due to a high re-infestation rate and their ability to develop resistance to traditional insecticides contained in some medications."

It is thought that head lice will not develop immunity to the newer silicone- and oil-based preparations because they have a physical rather than a chemical action on lice.

After a head lice infestation has been confirmed, you can treat the lice at home by wet comb using a head lice comb or medicated lotions (see below).

However, neither treatment method will protect against re-infestation if head-to-head contact is made with someone with head lice during the treatment period.

2. Wet-combing method

The wet-combing method involves removing the head lice by systematically combing the hair using a special fine-toothed comb with a spacing of less than 0.3mm. Your pharmacist can advise you on which combs are suitable.

No medicated products are necessary for wet combing. This can be beneficial because head lice are becoming more resistant to the insecticides that are commonly used to remove them.



However, the success of **the wet-combing method depends on adopting a painstaking approach that involves regular and thorough combing.**

The wet-combing method is described below.

- Wash the hair using ordinary shampoo and apply ample conditioner, before using a wide-toothed comb to straighten and untangle the hair.
- Once the comb moves freely through the hair without dragging, switch to the louse detection comb. Make sure that the teeth of the comb slot into the hair at the roots with the bevel-edge of the teeth lightly touching the scalp.
- Draw the comb down to the ends of the hair with every stroke and check the comb for lice.
- Remove lice by wiping or rinsing the comb.
- Work methodically through the hair section by section so that the whole head of hair is combed through.
- Rinse out the conditioner and repeat the combing procedure in the wet hair.
- **Repeat** the procedure on day five, nine and 13 in order to clear the young lice as they hatch, before they have time to reach maturity.

The time that it will take to comb your child's hair will depend on the type of hair that they have and its length. For example, short, straight hair can be quickly prepared and can be fine-toothed combed in a few minutes, whereas longer, curlier hair will take longer to comb.

3. Medicated lotion or spray

Medicated lotion or spray is an alternative method for treating head lice. However, no medicated treatment is 100% effective. Your pharmacist will be able to recommend an over-the-counter lotion or spray.

Medicated treatments should be used if a living (moving) head louse is found. Crème rinses and shampoos are not thought to be effective and are therefore not recommended.

Make sure that you have enough lotion to **treat everyone in your family** who is affected by head lice. Use enough to coat the scalp and the length of the hair during each application. Follow the instructions that come with the medicated lotion or spray when applying it. Depending on the product you are using, the length of time that it needs to be left on the head can vary from 10 minutes to 8 hours.

The normal advice is **to treat once, then repeat after seven days.** Some medicated products also supply a comb for removing dead lice and eggs. Traditional insecticides must not be used more than once a week for three weeks in a row. Some products carry a fire warning.



Some medicated products may be capable of killing eggs as well as lice, although there is no certainty of this. Check for baby lice hatching from eggs three to five days after you use a product, and again 10 to 12 days afterwards.

A minimum of **two** applications of lotion are needed to kill the lice over the hatching period because the **lotions do not always kill louse eggs**.

If the lice appear to be unaffected by the product (some lice may have developed resistance to a particular insecticide) or if the problem persists, seek advice from your school nurse, health visitor, pharmacist or GP.

4. When a parent finds head lice on their child's head, **they are to inform the staff at the next available opportunity**.

6. **Staff will inform other parents verbally and in writing using an outbreak notification notice**. The notice will be placed on the Main entrance door and the entrances to each separate room. Staff should be tactful and maintain confidentiality.

(Leaflets on Head Lice from are to be handed out to all parents)

7. When a child has head lice, Riverside Childcare asks that parents follow the advice above.

8. If a child/children continually have head lice, the centre shall enforce the Illness Policy and the child/children shall not be allowed to attend the centre **until the Centre receives a Doctor's Note to indicate the child/children can return**.

9. If head lice is a frequent recurring problem, the **Child Protection Policy** may be invoked.

10. If more advice is needed, the service will contact the public health nurse.

Person Responsible: Michael Dunster

This policy was reviewed by Riverside Childcare on Date: 27/11/23

Signed by: Michael Dunster on behalf of Management (Manager, Owner, Chairperson)

Review Date: 27/11/24



Date: 27/11/2023

RE: Head Lice in Riverside Childcare

Dear Parent or Guardian:

There has been a case of **Head lice** within your child's pre-school and your child may have been exposed.

What are Head Lice?

Head Lice are little insects with moving legs. They are often not much bigger than a pin head, but may be as big as a sesame seed (the seeds on burger buns). They live on, or very close, to the scalp and don't wander far down the hair shaft for very long. They can only live on humans; you cannot catch them from animals.

What are Nits?

Nits are not the same thing as lice. Nits are egg cases laid by lice, stuck on to hair shafts; they are smaller than a pin head and pearly white. If you have nits it doesn't always mean that you have head lice. When you get rid of all the lice, the nits will stay stuck to the hair until it grows out.

How are they spread?

Anyone can pick up head lice. They are most common among children as they often put heads together during play allowing the lice walk from one head to the next. Lice can also be passed indirectly by using someone else's hairbrush, combs or hats. Headlice do not reflect standards of hygiene. They are just as willing to live in clean or dirty hair.

Can you stop them?

The best way is for families to learn how to check their own heads. This way they find any lice before they have a chance to breed. They can then treat them and stop them being passed round the family. The way to check head is called "detection combing". This should be done regularly and in the case of a confirmed infection in one family member, the other members of the household should carry out "detection combing" twice weekly for one week.



How do I do detection combing?

You need a plastic detection comb, good lighting and an ordinary comb.

- Wash the hair well, then dry it with a towel. The hair should be damp, not dripping.
- Make sure there is good light, daylight is best.
- Comb the hair with an ordinary comb.
- Start with the teeth of the detection comb touching the skin of the scalp at the top of the head.
- Draw the comb carefully towards the edge of the hair.
- Look carefully at the teeth of the comb in good light.
- Do this over and over again from the top of the head to the edge of the hair all directions, working round the head.
- Do this for several minutes. It takes 10 to 15 minutes to do it properly for each head.
- If there are head lice, you will find one or more lice on the teeth of the comb. A magnifying glass may be useful for identifying lice.

How do I treat head lice?

Please refer to our Head Lice Policy for more information.

A head lice lotion (not shampoo) should be used. Ask your local chemist, public health nurse or family doctor which lotion to use, and how long to leave it on.

- Put the lotion on to dry hair. Use the lotion in a well ventilated room or in the open air.
- Part the hair near the top of the head, put a few drops on to the scalp and rub it in. Part the hair a bit further down the scalp and do the same again. Do this over and over again until the whole scalp is wet.
- You don't need to put lotion down long hair any further than where you would put a pony-tail band.
- Keep the lotion out of the eyes and off the face.
- Let the lotion dry on the hair. Some lotions catch fire, so keep well away from flames, cigarettes, stoves and other sources of heat. Don't use a hair dryer.
- Treat all of them again seven days later in the same way with the same lotion.
- Check all the heads a day or two after the second treatment. If you still find living, moving lice, ask your public health nurse or family doctor for advice.

Yours sincerely,

Noelia Hernandez (Manager)