

Health and Safety Information

Early Learning and Child Care

Head Lice and Nits

Information for Licensed Centres, Nursery Schools, and Homes

Why Head Lice Information Matters in Child Care?

This information is being shared to provide clear, consistent guidance to early learning and child care facilities regarding head lice and nits, based on current Manitoba Public Health advice. It brings together key guidance to support shared understanding, encourage reflection on existing practices, and promote approaches that minimize stigma and reduce disruption to children's and staff's daily routines.

Key Public Health Guidance

- Head lice are not related to personal hygiene.
- Head lice are not a health hazard, do not cause or carry disease, and are not a reportable condition under [The Public Health Act](#).
- Nits alone do not indicate active head lice. Active head lice are confirmed only when a live louse is found.
- Head lice spread mainly through direct head-to-head contact. Spread through shared personal belongings, such as combs, hairbrushes and hats is uncommon.

Attendance and Exclusion

As outlined by Public Health, children with head lice do not need to be excluded from child care. Exclusion from care can have social, emotional and economic impacts for children and families, particularly when head lice can go undetected for weeks and pose minimal risk to others.

Public Health guidance supports the safe and continued attendance for children with head lice once treatment has begun.

Public Health guidance also notes that:

- Routine head-checking programs are not necessary
- Requiring children to be “nit-free” does not reduce transmission

Role of Child Care Providers

In child care settings, families and health care providers are responsible for identifying and treating head lice. Child care staff support children's participation in care by maintaining normal routines and sharing Public Health information with families when appropriate.

Child care providers are encouraged to:

- Maintain normal routines when head lice are suspected
- Communicate with families in a calm, non-judgemental manner
- Share Public Health-approved information when needed

Facilities may also notify families when multiple cases occur in a room or group, without identifying any child. A sample letter for notifying parents can be found at [public-health-head-lice-case-letter-e.doc](#).

Public Health Support

Child care facilities may contact public health nurses within their respective [Regional Health Authorities](#) for consultation in complex or ongoing situations (e.g., repeated infestations or barriers to accessing treatment); however, they are generally not involved in routine cases.

For Additional Information:

- [Head lice | Caring for kids](#) (Canadian Paediatric Society)
- [Head Lice Fact Sheet](#) (Manitoba Public Health)
- [Pediculosis Capitis \(Head Lice\) Protocol](#) (Manitoba Public Health Head Lice)
- [Pediculosis \(Lice\)](#) (Winnipeg Regional Health Authority)
- [Reporting of Diseases and Conditions Regulation, M.R. 37/2009](#) (The Public Health Act)
- Health Links-Info Santé in Winnipeg: 204-788-8200; toll-free (outside Winnipeg): 1-888-315-9257