


Number: 40-90
Title: Lice (Head)

	POLICIES & PROCEDURES Number: 40-90 Title: Lice (Head)
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Introduction

Lice are small, tan colored, wingless insects that live on the human scalp and other hairy areas of the human body. They survive by sucking the blood of the host, which causes the persistent itch that is characteristic of lice. The eggs (nits) appear as small silvery/white ovals and are very firmly attached to the hair shafts. Lice rarely survive off the body for longer than 36 hours. Lice do not fly or jump and therefore need to be directly transported from one person to another. Transport can occur on any object that comes in contact with infected body hair and can include clothing, hats, combs, brushes and bedding.

Policy

1. Lice infestation shall be treated in a timely fashion.

Purpose

1. To prevent the transmission of lice

Procedure

1. Follow the directions as outlined in [Appendix A - Dealing with Head Lice](#).
2. Provide [Lice Fact Sheet](#) and also found in the Infection Prevention and Control Manual.

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References:

1. Pien FD, Pien BC. APIC Text of Infection Control and Epidemiology. Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology. 2000;106:3-5.
2. American Academy of Pediatrics. Section 3. Summary of Infectious Diseases, 388-9. In: Peter G, ed. 1997 Red Book: Report of the Committee on Infectious Diseases. 24th ed.

40-90 Appendix A – Dealing with Head Lice

DEALING WITH HEAD LICE

Identification

1. Inspect the scalp and hair, focusing on the nape of the neck & behind the ears. See handout "What is Lice" for description of louse.
2. The nit is an egg that is attached to the hair shaft. The eggs cannot hatch below 24°C therefore nits that are found more than 1/2 inch from the skin have probably hatched.

Treatment - Notify Pharmacy if patient is pregnant or under 6 years of age.

1. Wash hair with regular shampoo, rinse and ensure hair is dry. Avoid crème rinses and/or conditioners.

Permethrin (Nix™, Kwellada P™)	Isopropyl Myristate (Resultz)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Apply sufficient shampoo to saturate the hair and scalp.• Leave on for 10 minutes.• Rinse well.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Apply 15-30mls for short hair; 60mls for long hair.• Rub in and leave for 4 min, then add water and work into a good lather.• Rinse well.

2. Obtain a fine-tooth comb from SPD (#42690) to remove any residual nits. Repeat combing q24-48hrs.
3. To facilitate nit removal - soak hair in a 1:1 vinegar/water solution, wrap in a towel for 1 hour, comb and rinse well.

24-48 Hours Post-Treatment

1. Inspect for signs of live lice.
2. If present, obtain physician's order for a different product for the second application and repeat above procedure.
3. If live lice are not seen, repeat treatment in 7-10 days, with physician's order.
4. Consult Infection Prevention & Control Professional or Infectious Diseases physician if second application is ineffectual within 24-48 hours.

Prevention and Disinfection

1. All clothing and bedding which has been in contact with the head or body 2 days prior to treatment should be machine washed in hot water and dried in a dryer at least 20 minutes or dry-cleaned. Soak brushes and combs in hot water for 10 minutes or wash in lice shampoo every day until infestation is over.
2. All healthcare agency linens may be treated as regular soiled linen.
3. Application of medicated shampoo can exacerbate pruritis and must not be interpreted as treatment failure.
4. Family members and close contacts should be inspected and treated if required.

Precautions

1. Initiate Contact Precautions for **24-48 hours after each treatment.**
2. Lice are transmitted through **head to head contact or contact with any object** that comes in contact with infected body hair (hats, towels, brushes, bedding).