

MYTHS ABOUT HEAD LICE – “SOMETIMES I’M MISUNDERSTOOD”

Myth 1 – *the presence of lice is a sign of poor personal hygiene.*

Fact 1 – Head lice prefer a clean scalp. It doesn’t matter your sex, age, race or how much money you have!

Myth 2 – *only children get head lice.*

Fact 2 – Head lice like adults as much as children, but it’s easier to move from one child to another because of their close contact in daycare settings, preschools or schools.

Myth 3 – *If your head isn’t itchy, you don’t have lice.*

Fact 3 – contrary to common thinking, head lice may be in your hair for weeks or months without making you itch. In fact, even though they are in your hair, only one-third of you will be scratching.

Myth 4 – *long hair encourages infestation.*

Fact 4 – Head lice are more interested in your scalp than your hair, so cutting hair will not get rid of head lice, but shorter hair makes it harder for them to climb aboard.

Myth 5 – *Lice can be “caught” from plants, pets and other animals.*

Fact 5 – Head lice can live on YOU, but they can’t live on your plants, pets or other animals.

Myth 6 – *Lice can jump and fly from one person to another.*

Fact 6 – Head lice don’t have wings. They can’t jump, but can run quickly from one head to another wherever and whenever heads meet. Head lice may hide in hats and other headgear, scarves and accessories.

Myth 7 – *Persistence of an itchy scalp following treatment is a sign of treatment failure.*

Fact 7 – Your scalp may be itchy for up to 10 days after successful treatment. If your head is itchy past 10 days, it may be a sign that head lice are still there or new lice have moved in!

Myth 8 – *Head lice infestation is an infection that can cause serious disease. An outbreak of head lice is a public health emergency.*

Fact 8 – Head lice are more of a nuisance than a threat to your health. You might have heard of some of their relatives. One of them, the pubic louse or “crab” louse is found in coarse body hair. Another one, the body louse, is the only one known to carry disease. To date, head lice have not been implicated as vectors (carriers) in the spread of disease.

They are often accused of causing infection, but it isn't true. When you scratch your scalp, you help germs get under your skin

Reference: Sections 7, 17, 20, 22, 65, 85 School Act
Child, Family and Community Service Act
Island Health Recommended Head Lice Management
American Academy of Pediatrics. Clinical Report – Head Lice, July 26, 2010, Pediatrics.
<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/126/2/392.full.pdf>
Canadian Pediatric Society, Head Lice, http://www.caringforkids.cps.ca/handouts/head_lice
HealthLinkBC, Head Lice, <https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/healthfiles/hfile06.stm>
Interior Health website on head lice management, which includes a power point presentation and video on the treatment of head lice,
<http://www.interiorhealth.ca/YourHealth/SchoolHealth/HeadLice/Pages/default.aspx>

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