

**Hochtaunuskreis
Der Kreisausschuss
-Gesundheitsamt-
Ludwig-Erhard-Anlage 1-4
61352 Bad Homburg v.d.H.**

INFORMATION concerning HEAD LICE

Head lice are a constant problem in our region. Pre-school and school children are most susceptible to infestation but adults can be affected too.

How can I reduce the risk of infection?

Exaggerated personal hygiene or preventative measures are no protection. Important aspects are:

- To inform yourself about the condition!
- Look carefully and be aware of the risk of infestation
- If the worst comes to the worst act responsibly and reasonably

How are lice passed on?

Lice are mainly spread by head to head contact. The 2-3mm long insects can move quickly but are unable to jump or fly. As a rule they are passed on from one person to another by close physical contact in school, gym etc, or at home. It is unusual for them to be spread by coming into contact with objects (scarves, soft toys, hats, articles of clothing etc.)

How do I recognise lice infestation?

The light-brown lice or larvae are very difficult to see with the naked eye. Use a magnifying glass to be absolutely sure. They tend to be found on the warmer parts of the scalp – behind the ears, above the neck or under the fringe. The nits (eggs) are easier to make out and are found in the same areas as the lice. These whitish, oval-shaped structures are glued to the hair by the lice after laying and can be combed off easily.

I've discovered lice or nits – what should I do?

1. Treatment

See your doctor! Any prescribed medication should be taken adhering closely to the instructions. Dosage and duration are fundamental to a successful treatment. The following products have been approved by the Ministry of the Environment and the Robert-Koch-Institute:

- Allethrin (z. B. Jacutin Pedicul Spray®)
- Permethrin (z. B. Infectopedicul®)
- Pyrethrum (z. B. Goldgeist forte®)
- Medizinprodukte (z. B. Nyda L®, Jacutin Pedicul Fluid®, Mosquito® Läuseshampoo)

These products are very effective in eradicating lice and their larvae but not as effective in dealing with nits. These should be removed with a nit-comb after the initial treatment, additionally rinsing with a luke-warm vinegar solution (1 part 6% vinegar 2 part water) and

letting the hair soak for 10min. The whole procedure should be repeated 8-10 days after the initial treatment to minimize the risk of a renewed infestation.

2. People who have had contact with the infested person

Family and people who have come into contact with the patient should be checked to avoid transmission or a renewed infection of the person under treatment.

3. Surroundings

In addition to the above the following hygiene tips are recommended

- ❖ thorough cleaning of all combs, hair brushes and clothes brushes
- ❖ used towels, clothes sheets etc should be changed and washed at 60° or hotter
- ❖ All textile surfaces in the house (and car!) should be vacuum cleaned

For things that cannot be washed at 60° the following alternatives are recommended:

- Spray with a suitable product (e.g. Jacutin N)
- Store in a tightly closed plastic bag for 2 weeks
- Treat with hot, dry air (min 45° for 1 hour)
- Freeze for a day (-10°C -15°C)

Are there any legal requirements I have to comply with?

§ 34 of the Prevention of Infection laws states that people affected by head lice are not allowed to visit public institutions. It is the duty of parents to inform the kindergarten or school etc. about the infestation. The institution informs in turn the local public health authority and (anonymously) the parents/guardians of classmates etc.

According to the Prevention of Infection laws an affected person cannot return to a public institution until a doctor has given him/her a clean bill of health and there is no longer a risk of spreading. This means that children are allowed to visit a public institution only after a successful treatment (supervised by a doctor), removal of all lice and nits and a thorough cleaning of the home has been carried out. A doctor's sick note is only required after a renewed infestation.

The public health authority records the number of infections whilst advising and supporting public institutions and affected citizens. It acts as contact during cases of increased infestation.

Swift action is required to minimize the spreading of head lice for the sake of us all. Parents should be aware of their heightened responsibility.

***If you have any questions do not hesitate to contact your Public Health Authority:
Tel.: 06172/999-5870, -5872, -5874, -5875***