

## PUBLIC HEALTH FACT SHEET

No. 105

### *HEAD LICE (NITS)*

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#### **ALL PARENTS ARE ASKED TO MAKE A SPECIAL EFFORT TO REDUCE THE INCIDENCE OF HEAD LICE IN THE NORTHERN TERRITORY**

- Due to the warm, humid climate of the Northern Territory, head lice infestation occurs frequently within our schools.
- Head lice infestation occurs in cycles, which are generally worse during the top end build-up and wet season.
- Head lice eggs (nits) look like small whitish specks which stick to hair and cause an irritating itch especially behind the ears, the back of the neck and under fringes.
- Children from all social and ethnic backgrounds are at risk.
- Head lice are normally “just a nuisance” however children can experience problems which include:
  - Behaviour and sleep disturbance
  - Infection of the scalp and surrounding lymph glands, caused by scratching
- If you suspect head lice, prove they are there before applying treatment.
- Use plain white conditioner and a head lice comb to remove excess lice and nits before applying treatment.
- Monitor the effectiveness of treatment using plain white conditioner and a head lice comb.
- Re-treat only if further adults or lice are detected.

Information about treatments for head lice is available from your local school, pharmacy or Community Care Centre.