

Te Kōhanga Reo o Ngā Kuaka

Kutu Policy

Kutu – are also called Head lice, nits, kutis, kutu bug, headlouse or cooties.

What are kutu?

Kutu are small flat insects, about 2-3mm long. They live on the scalp. Kutu lay their eggs (nits) on a strand of hair.

Insects:

Kutu can be white, brown or dark grey. They are usually in the hair at the back of the neck or behind the ears.

Eggs (nits):

Female kutu lay approximately 7-10 eggs each night. The eggs are small and hard (like a grain of salt) and are normally pale grey in colour. Eggs are laid close to the scalp; are usually pale grey in colour and firmly glued to strands of hair. After hatching, the empty eggs cases are white, Eggs hatch in 9 days, and a kutu lives for 40 days.

1. RATIONALE:

- 1.1 Te Whariki: Well-being: Children experience an environment where their health is promoted.
- 1.2 It is important that mokopuna, whānau and kaimahi experience an environment where they are safe and secure, they are respected, and their dignity is protected.
- 1.3 Nga Kuaka is committed to providing a Healthy environment for all pepi, tamariki and kaimahi.

2. PURPOSE:

- 2.1 To maintain the health of all pepi/tamariki at Nga Kuaka
- 2.2 To ensure & maintain the health of all staff/kaiako at Nga Kuaka
- 2.3 To assist in the management and control of spreading kutu within Nga Kuaka

NOTE:

Anyone can get Kutu – It doesn't matter how clean or dirty a person's hair is. Kutu are spread by crawling from one person's hair to another's – usually between people who are in close contact, such as whānau or hoa kura.

Kutu:

- Kutu cannot jump, fly or swim
- Do not carry disease
- Stay on the scalp after swimming or bathing/showering

3. GUIDELINES:

3.1 It is the responsibility of all parents to:

- Check their pepi/tamariki's hair weekly for kutu;
- to provide adequate treatment if kutu are found and
- inform Kaiako if your pepi/tamariki does have kutu

OR

3.2 When Kaiako/Kaimahi visibly see that a tamaiti is showing signs and symptoms of kutu

- Mātua will be contacted by the Tumaki to collect the tamaiti to begin treatment as soon as possible that day. This is important for the comfort and emotional wellbeing of the tamaiti and to ensure control of the infestation.

OR

- Whānau will be advised discretely upon pick up of their tamaiti.
- The tari will send out a pānui via email to all whānau advising that they check their tamaiti for kutu.
- This will assist the kohanga to prevent a breakout.

Please be assured that the privacy, confidentiality and respect of our pepi, tamariki and whānau will be upheld by Kaiako.

3.3 An infected tamaiti will be able to return to Kohanga:

- Once their hair has been treated
- AND**
- Mātua have confirmed with the Tumuaki that all kutu are dead and the nits (eggs) have been removed.

What to do:

Check all whānau members of the household daily at the same time for at least three weeks.

Treat anyone who is hosting kutu. Effective treatment need not be chemical or expensive.

Be prepared to continue treatment for about three weeks depending on the method chosen. Three weeks is the length of the kutu breeding cycle; you need to break the cycle or infestation will continue.

After each treatment, comb the hair with a fine-toothed comb.

Extra precautions may include washing all bedlinen, pillowcases and towels in hot water and tumble drying for 20 minutes on high. Other items that have come into contact with heads should also be thoroughly cleaned.

Soak hairbrushes and combs in hot water for at least ten minutes.

Vacuuming carpets and rugs may be helpful.

Repeat treatment 7 to 10 days after initial treatment.

Treating the hair is no guarantee that the problem has been eradicated. Success is more likely if treatment is thorough, checking is daily for at least three weeks and tamariki are reminded to avoid head to head contact with others.

What not to do:

Do not use shampoo, conditioner or a hair drier on hair within 24 hours of using a chemical treatment. Each of these can make the treatment less effective or cause it to fail.

Do not use ordinary insecticides, pet shampoo or flammable petroleum products.

Do not use chemical products if the person applying the treatment or the person being treated is pregnant.

Treatment:

Effective treatment can be cheap. A combination of methods is likely to be most successful.

Dry combing

Fingernails can effectively remove eggs.

Some combs will extract adult kutu only and leave the eggs; the closer together the teeth of the comb are the more successful combing will be.

Wet combing

This method, using any kind of hair conditioner, is for detection and removal of kutu and eggs. It is recommended that this treatment be repeated on alternate days for three weeks.

The idea is to smother the kutu with conditioner, preventing them moving away, and to allow manual removal.

Do not use conditioner within a day of using a chemical treatment; it will make the chemical treatment ineffective.

Apply enough conditioner (much more than usual) on dry hair to thoroughly cover the whole scalp and all the hair from the roots to the tips. Keep the conditioner in the hair. Conditioner stuns the insects for about 20 minutes.

Comb the hair straight and get knots out with an ordinary comb.

Use a fine-toothed comb to systematically comb the hair. Comb the full length of each hair.

Wipe the comb with a clean tissue after each stroke of the comb.

After thorough combing and inspection, wash the conditioner out.

Electric combs

Electric battery-operated combs are available to be used on dry hair. These are claimed to stun or kill the kutu so they let go of the hair and can be combed out. Clean the teeth after each stroke of the comb. Electric combs should be used on alternate days for two or three weeks to break the breeding cycle. People with epilepsy, heart disease or pacemakers should not use these however.

Haircuts

Short hair is easier to comb, requires less time to treat and makes detection easier. It should not be necessary to shave heads. Hairdressers may refuse to cut infested hair.

Apply the treatment strictly in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

Treat those members of the household who appear to be hosting kutu. Do not treat babies with chemicals.

Do not wash the hair or use conditioners for at least 24 hours after treating. Treatments are designed to coat the hair shaft and should be allowed to remain. Do not wash chemicals off.

Do not use hairdryers on treated hair. The heat may break down the active chemical.

Comb the hair carefully to remove as many dead or live kutu and eggs as possible.

Repeat the treatment after seven to ten days.

Check all members of the household daily for a period of three weeks.

Herbal remedies

Several herbal preparations are available, however the effectiveness of these is not clearly established. Most herbal remedies might be regarded as expensive conditioners that are no more effective than other conditioners. Some, such as tea tree oil, may be, volume for volume, more toxic to humans than chemical preparations. Olive oil, hair gel and mayonnaise may make combing easier.