

Back to school time often means dealing with lice

Allanah Pinhorn
Special to Londoner

It's the middle of the night and a small voice wakes you up, complaining of an itchy head and uncomfortable crawling sensation; head lice. They're common, they're gross, but, fortunately, they're completely normal - in fact they're the second most communicable affliction in children - and simple to deal with, when you know how.

Caroline Bonham, of Lice Squad Canada, London, knows lice. "I would prefer to have head lice over bedbugs or fleas," she says. "Don't panic! I have so many people crying on the phone, they've cancelled everything and they're absolutely beside themselves, and I know what it's like, it does make your skin crawl, but it's a solvable problem. It doesn't spread as easily as people think."

Head lice are the small grey or brown bugs which live, feed and lay eggs in human hair. Designed perfectly to cling to strands, millions of people worldwide will experience a case of these nasty critters every year. Found near the ears, at the crown of the head and



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Armed and ready to do battle, the Lice Squad staff helps families who are afflicted by this common scourge.

the base of the neck, they can be combed or picked out easily with the right tools.

Bonham recommends a high quality louse comb, such as the Nit Free Terminator, to pick do a thorough combing of about an hour. As over 88 per cent of lice in North America are now resistant to the standard over-the-counter pesticides, which do not kill or remove the eggs of the lice even when they do work, hand picking is the most effective treatment.

"I don't want to sound lax about it, they can be very persistent," Bonham says,

"So what's going on is the pesticides aren't working? We come in with a really good comb and it sounds just way too simple. As a society we just want to spray stuff to get rid of stuff quickly ... there's a sense of panic."

Other factors often come into play when dealing with misconceptions about lice, such as using some very creative potions like vodka, kerosene, Vaseline or mayonnaise to rid a home of the problem. None of these methods work, although a head saturated in olive oil will work to suffocate the bugs, as an additional treat-

ment to nit picking.

So what do you do when your child gets the dreaded school letter announcing that someone in their classroom has a case of lice? Relax and know that they're not as contagious as people think. Head-to-head contact is needed for the bug to crawl from one head to another; they do not jump, fly or colonize carpets or fabric.

"They're living on heads, not in beds. Head lice are on the head and bedbugs are in the bed. It's just a matter of their habitat," says Bonham.

An adult requires a blood meal every day or it will die, so removing them from the host will kill off an infestation. Eggs will also need to be removed from hair. Look for teardrop shaped brown or grey sacs, glued to one side of the hair, at an angle. Lice and their eggs are never white in colour and if it can be easily flicked away it is not an egg.

Vacuum wherever a head may rest, put items that can be dried in a dryer, on high heat for half an hour and set other items aside for a day or two. The focus should be on removal, not cleaning, but if a thorough clean will make

you feel better, then do so after the first big removal session.

Keep hair tied in a ponytail or braid at school and Bonham advocates weekly nit combing, as a preventative measure. "Make it part of Sunday night bath time routine, just to make sure. I think everyone should have a nit comb in their medicine

cabinet and just use it once a week for good measure."

She wants people to see lice for what it is: a common human affliction.

"I'm on a quest, I'm so absorbed in it. It is very rewarding; everyone is so relieved."

For more information: www.licessquad.com.



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Carolyn Bonham, of Lice Squad, received this picture from a client's child. "The size of the bugs indicate what a big problem this was in her world. It just broke my heart," she says.

Wellness through holistic healing

Josh Bury
Special to Londoner

It's a busy world and it seems that, increasingly, we sometimes aren't able to take the time we need to take care of ourselves.

Janis Hannan is a holistic therapist and the owner and operator of Heart Girl. She uses holistic treatments to help improve the lives of her clients. She offers law of attraction and personal empowerment counseling, aromatherapy massage, reflexology and Reiki at her London location at 781 Commissioners Road West.

After spending 12 years as a paralegal, Hannan realized that while she was good at her job, it didn't fulfill her. She also experienced personal health problems that made her rethink some of her choices.

"I had chronic pain, I had chronic headaches, I had depression and I had anxiety because I couldn't work for a

number of years," Hannan says.

She found what worked for her: holistic therapies. Following her newfound interests and in search of a different calling, Hannan began with an aromatherapy certification and then branched out into other holistic arts in night school while practicing during the day. She even did some part-time teaching at Fanshawe College along the way.

"Once I started opening the door and started working in the field, then I saw more stuff that I wanted to do and incorporate into my practice. Now, 13 years later, I have a selection of therapies which I use independently for those that are drawn to them," Hannan says, "but I also incorporate the other therapies that I have training and practice in."

One of the services offered by Heart Girl is law of attraction counseling. The sessions are normally one hour

in length.

"It is based on the principle that what you believe, what you think and what you feel determine what you attract into your life in terms of money, abundance, prosperity, relationships, circumstances, situations, people... all of those things. So if you're in a negative space in those things, you're going to attract negativity."

As part of this, Hannan teaches techniques and tools to help clients change their mindset, which they gradually integrate. But more than that, she also provides them with accountability, since the regular meetings help encourage clients to meet goals.

"I've worked with clients where I've seen change within four or five weeks in their lives," Hannan said, adding "it's one of my big passions right now, out of all the work that I do."

Aromatherapy is another of the offered services. This



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Janis Hannan, of Heart Girl, helps those dealing with pain discover how alternative therapies can help.

technique is often used by Hannan to help ameliorate anxiety, stress, tension, aches and pains, fibromyalgia and insomnia.

"When someone comes to see a professional aromatherapist, they're coming to receive a treatment geared at improving a health issue or condition," Hannan notes.

The therapist then devises a custom concoction of essential oils based on the ills suffered by the client and uses their medical history to avoid any potential irritants. This blend is applied to and absorbed by the client's skin as part of a gentle massage.

"So many people think that a massage needs to be heavy-duty to get results... but it doesn't need to be. With aromatherapy, it is very relaxing and what that means is it allows a person's body to heal without fighting something invasive coming into the body."

Reflexology, Hannan says, is a method by which specific nerve endings in the feet are stimulated to help deal with issues elsewhere in the body.

"What we're doing is working on the body's electrical system, to remove any congestants that might be present in the corresponding area of the reflex in the body," Hannan says.

Finally, Hannan also practices the energy manipulation technique known as Reiki. Originally a Japanese Buddhist discipline, the client remains fully clothed on a massage table as Hannan moves her hands into positions near or on the body.

"It's very relaxing. Everyone feels their own individual experience during the treatment. A Reiki practitioner is attuned to the Reiki energy and they're channeling this energy through their hands to the client."

And while these individual therapies often have specific aims, Hannan says that there are reasons to request these techniques even if you're not immediately suffering from health issues.

"I have lots of clients that aren't dealing with anything serious and they're just coming once a month for maintenance, to keep things in check," Hannan says.

For more information: www.heartgirl.net.