Cheat Sheets

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Bites, Stings, & Irritants

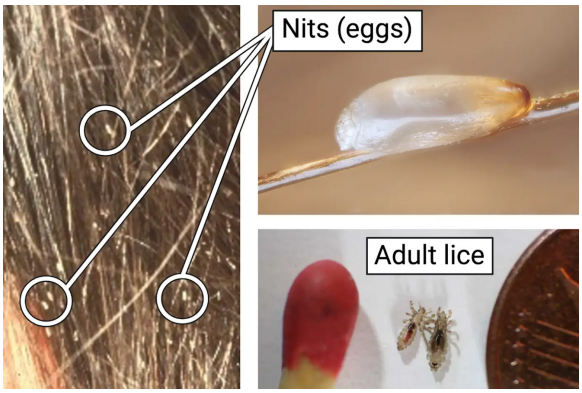
1. Lice (*Pediculosis capitis*)

Lice is an infestation of the scalp by *Pediculus humanus capitis* (head lice) that spreads through **direct contact** with infested individuals or objects (hats, brushes).

Findings

- Intense **pruritus** (excessive scratching of the scalp) and visible nits (white eggs) on the hair and scalp (**FIGURE 1**)

FIGURE 1. HEAD LICE NITS & ADULT LICE



Nursing interventions

- If hospitalized, initiate **contact isolation** precautions.
- Apply **permethrin 1%** cream (pediculicide) to the client's washed **hair**, leave for several minutes, then rinse.
- **Manually remove nits** using a fine-tooth comb.
- Provide client teaching:
  - **Wash** all clothing and bedding in **hot water** and **dry** on **high heat** to kill nits.
  - Seal **non-washable** items in **plastic** bags for **2 weeks**.
  - **Vacuum** furniture, carpets, and car seats.
  - Avoid **sharing** personal items, such as **brushes** or **hats**.
  - Close contacts (family members, classmates) should be examined for lice.

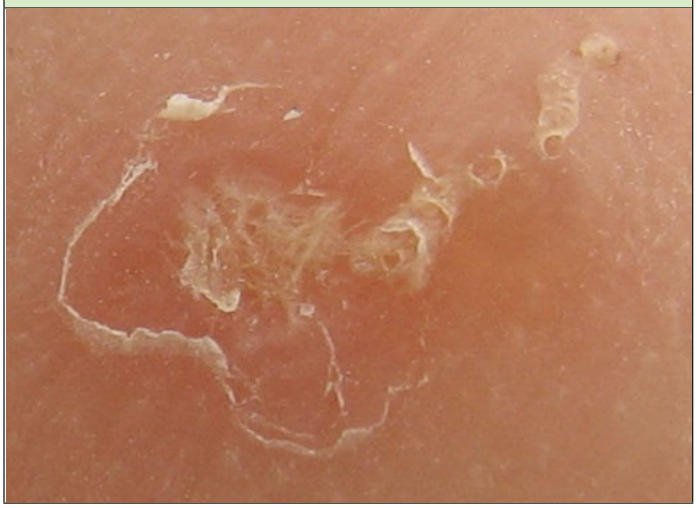
2. Scabies

Scabies is an infestation of the skin by the mite *Sarcoptes scabiei* that spreads through **close** personal **contact**.

Findings

- Rash with intense **pruritus**, especially at **night**
- **Burrow tracks** (grayish **thread-like** lines) (**FIGURE 2**)

FIGURE 2. SCABIES BURROW TRACKS



Nursing Interventions

- If hospitalized, initiate **contact isolation** precautions.
- Apply **permethrin 5%** cream (scabicide) to the client's **entire body** overnight; rinse off in morning.
- Provide client teaching:
  - **Treat close contacts**, even if asymptomatic, due to delayed symptom onset.
  - **Wash** clothing and linens in **hot water** and **dry** on **high heat**.
  - Apply topical **corticosteroids** or give oral **antihistamines** for residual pruritus (can last weeks after treatment).

NCLEX Star Points

1. **Lice and scabies treatment**: **Lice** is treated with **permethrin hair cream** (pediculicide). **Scabies** is treated with **permethrin** cream (scabicide) applied to the **entire body**.
2. **Lice infestation**: Teach clients to **wash clothing** and **bedding** in **hot water** and **dry** on **high heat**. Avoid **sharing brushes** or **hats**.

3. Scorpions, Snakes, & Spiders

Scorpions, snakes, and spiders inject **venom** that can damage tissue and cause **systemic** effects (neurotoxicity, respiratory distress), resulting in coma and death.

- **Children** require **immediate medical care** because they have more severe reactions.

Common findings

- **Localized** pain, redness, and swelling

Nursing interventions

- Monitor **ABCs** (**a**irway, **b**reathing, **c**irculation) and provide supportive care for severe reactions (oxygen, IV fluids).
- **Clean the wound** with antiseptic.
- Apply **ice** or **cool compress** to site to ↓ edema and the spread of venom; **do not** apply ice to **snake bites**.
- ✪ Contact **poison control** for specialized treatment advice.
- Administer **analgesics** for pain.
- Administer **antivenom** and **tetanus prophylaxis** if indicated.

4. Bees & Wasps

Bee and **wasp sting** reactions can range from mild to severe; **multiple stings** or venom **allergies** ↑ risk for life-threatening **anaphylaxis**.

Findings

- Localized pain, redness, swelling, pruritus
- **Anaphylaxis**: Airway edema, dyspnea, hypotension

Nursing interventions

- ✪ **Remove stinger** by scraping the skin using a thin, flat object (credit card) to stop venom exposure.
  - **Do not** use **tweezers**, which can squeeze out more **venom**.
- **Mild reactions**
  - **Clean site** with soap and water.
  - Apply **cool** compresses to ↓ swelling.
- **Anaphylactic reactions**
  - ✪ **#1 Priority =** administer **epinephrine** to vasoconstrict vessels and ↓ airway swelling.
  - Monitor **airway** and vital signs closely.
  - Provide **oxygen** and **IV fluids** if needed.
  - Administer **antihistamines** and **corticosteroids** to ↓ pruritus and swelling.
- Client **teaching** for bee and wasp venom **allergies** includes:
  - ✪ **Always carry** an IM **epinephrine** autoinjector (EpiPen) and wear a **medical alert bracelet** in case of an anaphylactic reaction.
    - Ensure clients and **caregivers** know how to **administer** epinephrine.
  - **Avoid** wearing **bright clothing** and perfume, which attract bees and wasps.

NCLEX Star Points

❸ **Bee & wasp sting interventions**: For **anaphylactic reactions** to bee and wasp stings, administer **epinephrine first** to vasoconstrict vessels and decrease airway swelling.

❹ **Bee & wasp sting teaching**: Teach clients allergic to bee and wasp venom to **always carry** an IM **epinephrine** autoinjector and wear a **medical alert bracelet** in case of an anaphylactic reaction.

5. Poison Ivy (Allergic Contact Dermatitis)

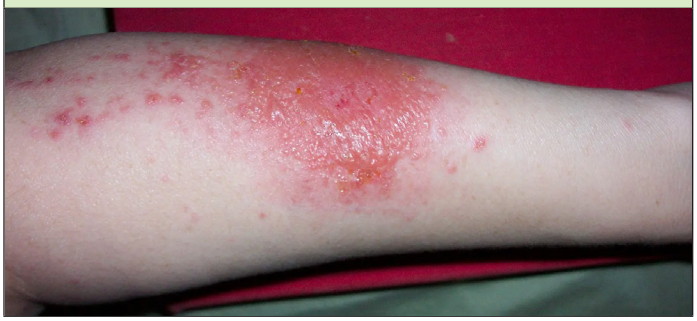
Exposure to **urushiol oils** in poison ivy, oak, and sumac can trigger allergic **contact dermatitis**.

- Spread through **direct contact** with the plant or contaminated object.

Findings

- Localized, intensely **pruritic red rash** that develops hours to days after exposure
- **Blisters** ooze and crust, then resolve (**FIGURE 3**).

FIGURE 3: POISON IVY RASH



Nursing interventions

- **Wash** affected areas **immediately** with **cool water** to remove urushiol oils from the skin.
  - **Avoid scrubbing** or using **harsh soap**, which can spread oils.
- **Remove** and wash contaminated **clothing** in hot water.
- Administer topical or oral **corticosteroids** and **diphenhydramine** for pruritus.
- Apply **compresses** of Burow solution (aluminum acetate) and prepare colloidal **oatmeal baths** to relieve pruritus.

NCLEX Star Points

❺ **Poison ivy**: **Immediately wash** the affected area with **cool water** to remove urushiol oils from the skin. **Avoid scrubbing** or using **harsh soap**, which can spread oils.

NCLEX Top 5 Targets

1. What is the treatment for a **lice** infestation? What is the treatment for a **scabies** infestation?
2. To eradicate a lice infestation, teach clients to **wash clothing** and **linens** in **warm water**. **(True or False?)** Clients should **avoid sharing** _____ and _____.
3. What **medication** should be administered **first** for an **anaphylactic** reaction to a bee sting?
4. Clients **allergic** to bee venom should **always carry** a(n) _____ in case of an **anaphylactic reaction**.
5. If a client is exposed to **poison ivy**, **immediately wash** the affected area with _____ **water**. To avoid spreading the plant oils, **avoid** _____ or using **harsh soap**.

Answers: 1. Apply permethrin hair cream; Apply permethrin cream to the entire body. 2. False: Hot water; brushes, hats 3. Epinephrine 4. IM epinephrine autoinjector (EpiPen) 5. cool water; scrubbing

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