



Head Lice Prevention



Dear Parents/Guardians,

This is a reminder that head lice occur when children come together and are in close contact. Because head lice come randomly, regular classroom checks are not done. Students are constantly changing classes with different students in each class. This makes it impossible to find the origin of the lice.

The school nurse will check individual students as staff refers them or parents may request that I check their child. Parents of students discovered to have head lice will be notified with instructions for treatment.

If your child comes home with head lice, please don't panic or be embarrassed. Head lice are pests, and **NOT** harmful and ANYONE can get them. Millions of people in the United States get them each year.

It is the primary responsibility of each parent to check weekly for signs of head lice. This would help decrease the number of infestations.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR:

- Persistently scratching the head, back of the neck, behind the ears where lice commonly are found.
- White specks (eggs) in the hair, which can be mistaken for dandruff. Dandruff is easily removed from the hair or scalp; however eggs, or nits are glued to the hair shaft and are difficult to remove.
- Tickling feeling of something moving in the hair.

IF LICE INFESTATION OCCURS:

- Contact your Doctor for treatment recommendations or use over the counter products (pediculicide).
- Do not use a combination shampoo/conditioner, or conditioner before using lice medicine. Do not re-wash the hair for 1-2 days after the lice medicine is removed. The special shampoos do not guarantee that all nits are dead; therefore if nits are not removed they will hatch and mature to an adult and continue the life cycle.
- Comb hair 2-3 times a day for **at least** 2-3 weeks to ensure all nits (eggs)/lice are removed using a long tined metal comb or lice comb.
- Machine wash and dry clothing, bed linens, and other items that the infested person wore or used during the 2 days before treatment using the hot water (130°F) laundry cycle and the high heat drying cycle.
- Soak combs and brushes in hot water (at least 130°F) for 5-10 minutes.
- Vacuum the floor and furniture/car, particularly where the infested person sat or lay (**Head lice survive less than 1-2 days if they fall off a person and if they do not have heat or food**)
- Do not use fumigant sprays; they can be toxic if inhaled or absorbed through the skin.

Help prevent head lice and frustration by:

- Avoid head-to-head (hair-to-hair) contact during play and other activities at home, school, and elsewhere (sports activities, playground, slumber parties, camp)
- Discourage sharing of hairbrushes, combs, hats, etc. with friends.
- Do not lie on beds, couches, pillows, carpets, or stuffed animals that have recently been in contact with an infested person.
- The key is to comb until the life cycle is broken. Often people will stop combing when they don't see a live louse or nit, however they are so small it may be missed and the nit will hatch and start the life cycle again.
- For more information please visit the CDC website page: <http://www.cdc.gov/parasites/lice/head/>

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