



Head Lice

If you receive a report of head lice, please know that we will do everything possible to keep parents informed about what is happening at school but, as I'm sure you realize, this is an issue that must be dealt with on the home front.

We are sharing some basic information about head lice with a few reminders:

1. Head lice are inconvenient and even troublesome. It is not life threatening, and there is no need for panic.
2. A case of head lice says absolutely nothing about the student's hygiene, home life or anything else despite the connotations often associated with this condition. Lice are non-discriminating in their choice of hosts.
3. Parents and students who have reported head lice are deserving of our understanding and compassion. They should not have to deal with teasing or whispers or unkind remarks of any kind. Please refrain from this type of behavior, and please make it clear that you expect the same from your children.

Symptoms:

1. Often asymptomatic
2. May have itchy scalp
3. Exam may reveal adult lice, gray bugs about 1/16th inch in length. Nits (louse eggs) are more likely to be seen. They are white globules that adhere to the hair shaft and resemble dandruff and are likely found in hair around ears and the nape of the neck.

Modes of Transmission:

1. Direct contact with an infested person.
2. Indirect contact with an object that has been contaminated with lice (i.e. hair brushes, combs, shared clothing).

Incubation Period:

None. As soon as contact takes place and the louse has been transferred to another person, eggs hatch in approximately one week when kept at body temperature. Lice can survive about 48 hours when not in contact with a human host.

Period of Communicability:

As long as lice or eggs remain alive on infested person or clothing. **Your child can return to school 24 hours following treatment if proof of treatment is given.** The case must be reported to the school office.

The following is a checklist for you to follow to be sure that you have done your part in controlling the spread of head lice in your home.

PEDICULOSIS (HEAD LICE CHECK LIST – (Please mark each item as you do it.)

- _____ **Don't panic** – anyone can get head lice.
- _____ **Check all other family members** to see if they are also infected. Any family member with evidence of head lice must also be treated.
- _____ **Consult your physician or pharmacist** for a head lice shampoo or treatment. Follow the directions on the label (most say to leave on for at least 10 minutes). If you use Nix, it leaves a residue on your hair to fight re-infestation, so do not wash the hair immediately and use only a mild shampoo when you do re-shampoo.
- _____ **Comb** the head thoroughly with a “nit” comb to remove the nits (eggs). Hold a small section of hair and stroke from the scalp out. Removing nits is time-consuming but is important to prevent re-infestation.
- _____ **Wash all clothes**, bed linens and towels in hot water and dry on hot cycle for at least 20 min. Items that cannot be safely washed, such as stuffed animals, should be dry cleaned or stored in sealed plastic bags for a minimum of two weeks.
- _____ **Clean combs and brushes in hot, soapy water.** Water should be at least 130 degrees F., and it is advisable to let combs and brushes soak in the hot water for 10 minutes. Also, wash all hair accessories, such as ribbons, barrettes, and headbands.
- _____ **Vacuum everywhere** to make sure your home is free of lice. Vacuum carpets, pillows, mattresses, upholstered furniture; anything that might hold lice. Don't forget the car and car seats. Do a thorough job and discard the vacuum bag promptly. Use of commercial sprays is **not recommended** in lieu of vacuuming.

Please feel free to call the School Office should you have any other questions or concerns. If we have information you need on head lice, we are happy to share it. If we don't have what you need, we'll help you find it.