

Parent Information: Head Lice

Things you should know about head lice

- ◆ Direct, physical, head-to-head contact is the usual method of transmission
- ◆ Lice do not jump, fly or swim... they are, however, good crawlers
- ◆ Check your child's daily for several weeks, then monitor weekly
- ◆ Mature lice, which are no bigger than a sesame seed, avoid light and are hard to see
- ◆ Lice eggs or "nits" are usually found close to the scalp – usually within ½ inch. They appear as tiny whitish ovals that are glued to the hair shaft. They cannot easily be flicked away as dandruff can.
- ◆ Head lice do not transmit disease and are not a serious medical condition.
- ◆ They cannot survive on your pets

If you find lice on your child, please notify the school and keep your child home until properly treated. Treatment and nit removal should only take a day. Continue to examine all family members for 3 weeks and treat if live lice or nits close to the scalp are found.

Check Regularly – Treat Quickly

Help Keep Head Lice Off Your Child

How to Treat Head Lice

Please contact your child's physician regarding recommendations for lice treatments. Read and follow the directions carefully. Do not over treat.

Manual Removal of Head Lice and Nits

Remove all nits from the head: This is the most important lice control measure. Complete nit removal is time-consuming but is critical for successful treatment. Lice shampoos do not remove the eggs from the hair. The eggs must be combed out and/or manually removed. Sit behind your child in a room with good lighting to comb through the hair, one section at a time. Use a fine-toothed nit comb. These combs are sold at most stores or may be included in packages of the chemical treatments. Your child's hair should be clean, wet, well combed or brushed to remove tangles before using the louse comb. A conditioner may be used to lubricate the hair. Divide hair into small sections. Comb through each section until no more lice or nits are observed. Clean the comb frequently with a paper towel to remove any lice eggs.

Continue to comb daily until no live lice are discovered for 3 weeks. Adult female lice cement eggs to the base of the hair shaft near the scalp. Combs, brushes, hats and other hair accessories in contact with an infested person should be washed in hot water (130F) to dislodge any lice or nits, and should not be shared with other family members.

Treatment of Clothes/Household Cleaning

All items your child has been in contact with in the past two days such as towels, pillowcases, sheets, pajamas, clothes, coats, hats, and similar items should be washed in hot water (130F) and dried on high heat for at least 30 minutes. Items that cannot be washed may be stored in tightly sealed plastic bags for a period of two weeks or may be placed in a freezer for 48 hours. Lice in the home environment (not on the head) usually die within a day and the eggs generally cannot live much longer. Vacuuming the house, mattress and furniture is recommended. Using household insecticides to treat the home, vehicles, carpets or furniture will unnecessarily expose your household to harmful chemicals.