

Head Lice Facts

Orange Grove ISD and the Health Services team continuously work to control the occurrences of head lice in your child's classroom. As always, we appreciate your continued support of our efforts.

Lice are small, grayish-white insects, 1/16 to 1/8 inches long, shaped like a football and are about the size of a sesame seed. They don't usually carry disease, but can cause your child and family discomfort, stress and sometimes skin irritation. Lice live on a body around 30 days while feeding on blood every 3-6 hours, and lay from 50-150 eggs or nits. The eggs hatch in 5-10 days and become adults in two weeks. If not on a body, they die within 24-48 hours. Because they multiply rapidly, they require prompt treatment.

Children get head lice or Pediculosis almost as much as the common cold. Children get lice more than teens or adults and ANY child can get head lice. Lice do not discriminate based on gender, ethnicity or socioeconomic status. A child is not sick or unclean if they have head lice and taking baths will not kill lice or prevent a child from getting lice. Children get lice from other children. They move from child to child from head to head contact. Lice cannot hop, jump, or fly, but can crawl from child to child anytime children are close together; during play or sports or even at nap time. Sharing combs, brushes, hair fasteners, hats, caps, coats, neck scarves and even head phones spreads them too. Sharing a locker or a cubbyhole with a lice-infested child is a common way to spread lice. If left behind, lice can attach to your child while sitting on carpets or furniture. Lice can even attach to stuffed toys. Dealing with lice is difficult, sometimes embarrassing and can be overwhelming to anyone caring for children.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR: Itching is the first sign of head lice, unless your child has a very light case. Check your child's head and scalp all over and especially behind the ears and near the nape of the neck when scratching begins. You may first find lice or nits on the hairs at the nape of the neck and behind the ears, but they can live anywhere; so, check all over the scalp. If you know of another child that has head lice, it is good practice to check your child's head periodically even without itching or the red, rash-like marks that may occur with a lice infestation. Sometimes, dandruff is confused with nits (lice eggs). Nits are teardrop in shape and grayish-white in color. Nits are very difficult to remove while dandruff will brush away easily.

While head lice does not warrant a visit to a doctor or clinic, instructions for treatment of head lice and how to keep them from recurring may be obtained from your doctor, a local pharmacist, your school nurse or your county health department. Head lice do require prompt treatment with a FDA approved shampoo that can be purchased without a prescription wherever drug store products are sold. For more information about this subject including [The Law as it relates to Head Lice](#), and other school health issues, you can also refer to www.dshs.state.tx.us/schoolhealth/

Respectfully,

Orange Grove ISD Health Services