

Dear Parent:

Your child was examined today and found to have head lice. Here is some information about head lice: • Head lice are most common in children. • Head lice do not cause other illness.

- Anyone can have head lice. It does not mean someone is dirty or poor.
- Head lice only live on people (not pets) and die if they are off people for 2 days.
- Head lice move from one person to another when people's heads touch.

Head lice are small insects about as long as a sesame seed. They are yellow-white to grey -white. **LICE DO NOT JUMP OR FLY. THEY DO NOT STAY ALIVE FOR LONG WHEN OFF THE HUMAN HEAD.** Head lice move fast on the scalp and are good at hiding in the hair.

You may find louse eggs called "nits" stuck to the hair. Nits are about the size of a typewritten comma. They may be yellow-brown to white. Each nit is stuck to a hair shaft near the scalp with a waterproof, cement-like substance. They are usually on hairs behind the ears and at the nape of the neck, but may be anywhere on the head. Nits cannot be washed or brushed out of the hair. Now that you know your child has head lice, you must:

- 1.) Treat your child to kill the insects.
  - Get head lice shampoo from your doctor, pharmacy or local health department.
  - Follow the directions to use the shampoo. **DO NOT OVER TREAT!!**
  - An adult should put the shampoo on the child. Make sure it is on the scalp for the right length of time.
  - Pick the nits out of the child's hair.\*
  - Then the child should put on clean clothes.
- 2.) Check the hair of other family members and close contacts for head lice. Be sure to check:
  - Babysitters,
  - Your child's close friends,
  - People where your child spent the night, and
  - Children in activities with your child, like sports team members. If your child's friends have head lice and are not treated, your child could get them again.
- 3.) Any items that your child has worn or used on the head in the past 48 hours (2 days) should be cleaned:
  - Machine wash clothes and sheets in **HOT** water.
  - Machine dry clothes and sheets on **HOT** for at least 20 minutes.
  - Vacuum carpets and furniture.
  - **DO NOT USE PESTICIDES IN YOUR HOME TO TREAT FOR HEAD LICE!**
  - Do not treat pets for head lice as head lice do not live on pets.

Your child should return to school after treatment. The school nurse may check your child's hair and scalp for head lice when your child goes back to school.

**Be sure to follow the instructions on the head lice shampoo. Many shampoo labels tell you to use it again in 7-10 days. You must do that to kill any lice that hatch from the nits during that time.**

\* Nit removal is very important for getting rid of head lice. Nit combs can help, but they may not get nits off the hair. To get nits out of your child's hair:

- Use a strong light so you can see the nits on the hairs.
- Use your finger tips and finger nails to find nits on the hairs.
- Use your fingers to pull nits off the hairs and drop the nits into soapy water.
- Wash your hands with soapy water after removing nits.

### **Alternative Head Lice Treatment**

- Saturate hair with mineral oil or baby oil, cover with plastic (food) wrap and cover the hair with a shower cap for 2-3 hours or overnight.
- Follow the cleaning sequence completely to ensure ridding the home/car of infestation.
  - Wash all items that have come in contact with the hair/head in hot water (clothing, towels, sheets, pillow cases, blankets) and dry in hot dryer as appropriate.
  - Vacuum mattress, couches, car upholstery, and rugs. (Sprays are not always effective, and are costly)
  - What cannot be laundered, place in plastic bags for 14 days.
- Shampoo the oil out of hair with Dawn detergent
- Follow up with regular shampoo
- While the hair is wet, warm white vinegar in a coffee cup/mug.
- Comb warm vinegar through hair (this should loosen nits); use lice comb to comb through the hair. Repeat warm vinegar/combing sequence to remove most of nits.
- Rinse the hair
- Blow dry hair.
- Sit child near a bright light
- Using lice comb, section off small sections of hair, comb at a 45-degree angle to the hair.
- Clean off comb with tissue with each swipe through hair.
- Manually pull the remainder of the nits.
- **Continue to check her hair every night for two weeks, then every three days for two weeks, then every week for a month or longer.**

Please ask your school nurse if you have questions about head lice.

Thank you for your help.

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