

## Head Lice Information For Parents

Below you will find information about checking your child for head lice as well as treatment information if your child does have a head lice infestation. **Do not treat your child for head lice or the environment unless you see nits (eggs) or head lice.** Anyone can get head lice... mainly through direct head-to-head contact but also from sharing hats, brushes and other personal items. Head lice are a problem in many communities and do not reflect poor hygiene or social status. Please do your part to prevent the spread of this communicable condition by checking your child(ren) daily for the next few weeks, and on a regular basis thereafter. Lice infestation is much easier to treat if caught early.

What to look for:

- Adult lice are small (about the size of a sesame seed).
- Eggs (nits) are usually found firmly attached to the base of the hair shaft.
- Lice stay near the scalp, often behind the ears, near the neckline, and back of the head.
- Head lice hold tightly to the hair. They move by crawling. They cannot hop or fly (they do not have wings), but do move quickly making it difficult to find in a child's hair.
- Signs of a head lice infestation include: itchy scalp, tickling sensation in a person's hair. Head lice are most active in the dark.

If your child is found to have head lice, it is important to treat your child before he/she returns to school. Please begin treatment as soon as possible. **Exclude your child from attendance at school or day care until their first treatment with a medicated head lice product (either over-the-counter or prescription). After treatment please bring in your used medication bottle to the Health Office.** Your prompt action is requested so that your child can get back to school as soon as possible and not miss learning opportunities in the classroom.

### **Tips for prescription or over-the-counter head lice treatment:**

- Whether using an over-the-counter head lice product or a prescribed treatment, it is very important that you read and follow all directions on the product's label.
- 8-12 hours after treatment, examine your child's head again. If you see a few lice still around, but they are moving more slowly than before, do not re-treat. Comb the dead lice and any remaining live lice out of the hair using a fine-toothed nit/lice comb.
- To comb through the hair, sit in a well lighted area. Part the hair into small sections and comb through one section at a time.
- Re-treatment is generally recommended for most lice medicines after 9-10 days.
- It is important to check the hair and comb through it with a nit comb every 2-3 days.

### **Tips for combing out head lice and nits:**

- Use a fine-toothed louse or nit comb. These combs may be included within packages of medicated head lice treatment or you may buy one from most drug stores or pet supply stores. Combs with metal teeth spaced close together seem to work best.

- Repeat combing until no more active lice are observed.
- Comb daily until no live lice are discovered for two weeks.

**Treatment of clothes and other items:**

- A clothes dryer set at high heat or a hot pressing iron will kill lice or their eggs on pillowcases, sheets, nightclothes, towels and similar items your child has been in contact with during the previous two days. (Lice and their eggs do not live more than one to two days off the head.)

**Cleaning the house and car:**

- Once lice fall off of the head, they usually die within a day and eggs generally cannot live much longer. Thoroughly vacuuming the house and furniture is all that is really necessary for cleaning the home. A major cleaning effort will do little to further eliminate head lice.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,  
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