

Dear Parent and Students:

Head lice have become a growing problem across the nation as well. Lice do not respect race, religion, age, social status, or education. This letter is designed to give you some general information about head lice and to enlist your help in preventing a problem in our schools during the coming year.

HOW DO YOU RECOGNIZE THE PROBLEM?

- Itching of the scalp, persistent scratching especially about the neckline and ears.
- Seeing live lice: These are brown, grayish-white or may assume the color of the person's hair and are about the size of small ants. The lice should not be confused with dandruff which is thin and flaky.
- Seeing lice eggs (nits) attached to the hair shaft near the scalp: Nits are shiny, grayish-white ovals that look like dandruff or droplets of hair spray but cannot be flicked off.

HOW DO YOU GET HEAD LICE?

- Head lice crawl from one person to another by direct contact. They do not hop, jump or fly.
- Lice are transmitted by means of combs, hats, wigs, brushes or other objects which come in contact with hair.
- They can fall on clothing, book bags, backpacks, sofas, rugs, pillows, bed linens and from there crawl into the hair of people who previously were not infested.

HOW DO YOU CONTROL HEAD LICE?

It is the responsibility of parents to inspect their children's hair. Schools cannot be expected to assume this responsibility on a regular basis.

- Do not share hats, coats, head gear, combs, or brushes.
- Inspect hair weekly or more often for presence of lice and/or nits.
- If you find lice or nits, treat promptly and according to directions accompanying the product used.

HOW DO YOU TREAT HEAD LICE?

1. Inspect the hair of all family members and treat those who are infested. Anyone sharing a bed with an infested person should be treated even if no lice or nits are seen.
2. Most treatments consist of applying a special medication to the scalp and hair following package directions. These preparations come in liquid form and can be bought in drug stores. Most do not require a doctor's prescription. Read instructions carefully especially noting if preparation is applied to wet or dry hair. **IT MUST BE STRESSED THAT THESE PRODUCTS ARE STRONG CHEMICALS AND THUS SHOULD NOT BE OVER-USED. THESE PRODUCTS SHOULD NOT BE USED ON INFANTS UNDER ONE YEAR OF AGE, PREGNANT WOMEN, OR NURSING MOTHERS WITHOUT A PHYSICIAN'S ADVICE AND APPROVAL.**
3. Nit removal may be aided by soaking the hair with a solution of half water and half white vinegar and applying a damp towel soaked in the same solution for 30 to 60 minutes. A fine tooth comb should then be used to go through each section of hair. Back combing may aid in nit removal or use of a flat head pair of tweezers to remove stubborn nits still clinging to the hair. Hair can then be rinsed in warm water.
4. **Lice can not live off of a human for longer than 18 hours. They have to have human blood to survive.** So wherever the child slept do not let them sleep there for 24 hrs. Then where ever the child sleeps that night do not let anyone go around that area for 24 hrs.
5. Articles such as combs and brushes should be thoroughly washed in hot water or discarded.
6. To remove lice from rugs, upholstered furniture, car seats, mattresses, etc. vacuum thoroughly and immediately throw vacuum bag away and remove from the home.
7. You may mix a bottle of Tea Tree Oil in a bottle o shampoo. Wash hair with mixture everyday. Do not skip a day of shampoo!! This may be purchased at any Herbal store or your local Wal Mart in the Vitamin section.
8. Use Olive Oil treatment - this helps smother live lice. It does not kill the nits but does make it easier to remove. Saturate the hair with olive oil and massage it into the hair and scalp. Cover the head with a shower or swim cap, tie in place and leave on for 8 hours. Do not do this while children are unsupervised - the cap may come loose and choke the child.
9. Use Vinegar treatment - same as Olive Oil.

HOW DOES THE SCHOOL TREAT LICE?

If student is discovered to have head lice:

1. The parent is notified.
If live lice is found student will be sent home immediately.
If nits only are found a letter will be sent home and student sent back to class for the day. **Neither one will be allowed to return unless rechecked.**
2. The student should be treated or head lice before returning to school.
3. All live lice and nits have to be removed.
4. School nurse rechecks student. **Suggested time 7:50 am - 10:50 and 1:00pm - 3pm. If you arrive between this time frame medication students will be coming in and out of office. Also between 7:50 and 8:45 students will be coming in and out of office.**
5. No Doctor or Health Department can clear student. Only the school nurse can clear a student.
6. Starting on second day of absent the student will receive 0's for all grades until cleared for return.
7. Doctor excuses will not be taken during lice absent unless Hospitalized or Surgery.
8. If family has trouble eliminating the head lice our school Social Workers would go to the students' home.
9. In some instances, student in an entire classroom may be checked for lice, however, this is time consuming and an interruption in the instructional program. Parents are expected to assume responsibility of checking their children's hair on a regular basis.
10. The use of insecticide spray in a school setting for treating the environment is not done or advised because of the toxicity and possible allergic reaction of students and/or staff. Thorough vacuuming and cleaning is sufficient at home and school.

School Nurse
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