

## Peninsula School District

### Head Lice Information for Parents

Head lice (pediculosis) are small, wingless insects about the size of a sesame seed that lay tiny, tear drop shaped eggs (nits) in the hair. Nits attach to the hair shaft approximately ¼ inch from the scalp and are often found around the neck or ears. Head lice are a nuisance but do not spread disease. Anyone can get head lice, although it is more common among younger age groups. Head lice occurrence is not related to personal hygiene or cleanliness in the home or school. Notify the health room if your student has head lice.

#### Transmission

Lice are transmitted by direct head to head contact. They do not jump, hop or fly. Although uncommon, head lice can be spread when hats, combs/brushes or hair clips are shared. Pets do not transmit head lice.

#### Signs and symptoms

Signs and symptoms of head lice include a tickling feeling of something moving in the hair, itching, or sores on the head/neck area caused by scratching. Examine your student's head for crawling lice and nits if your child exhibits symptoms. People with crawling lice or nits within ¼ inch of the scalp should be treated. Examine all household members every two to three days.

#### Treatment

Head lice can be treated with products available over the counter at the pharmacy. Treat all affected family members and remove nits close to the scalp (within ¼ inch) at the same time. Repeat treatment in 10-14 days according to product directions. A health care provider can discuss appropriate treatment options, including prescription products. There is no research evidence that home remedies are effective.

It is critical to follow treatment instructions carefully. Pay particular attention to whether the product should be applied to wet or dry hair and the length of time it should remain on the hair. Some products recommend the use of non-conditioning shampoos to improve efficacy. All products should be rinsed over a sink rather than a bath or shower to limit skin exposure and with warm water instead of hot water to minimize skin absorption.

#### Control

Machine wash and dry clothing, bed linens, and other items that an affected person wore or used during the two days before treatment using hot water and high heat drying cycle. Clothing and items that are not washable can be sealed in a plastic bag and stored for two weeks. Long hair can be kept up in a braid or a ponytail. Do not share hats, scarves, helmets, combs, brushes, or hair clips

Vacuum the floor and furniture, particularly where the affected person sat or lay. Head lice only survive one to two days away from the scalp. You do not need to spend excessive time or money on cleaning unaffected household areas. The use of chemical sprays or bug bombs are not recommended.



#### PEDICULOSIS RESOURCES

American Academy of Pediatrics

[www.AAP.org](http://www.AAP.org)

[www.HealthyChildren.org](http://www.HealthyChildren.org)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

<http://www.cdc.gov/parasites/lice/head/schools.html>

<<http://kids.nationalgeographic.com/content/dam/kids/photos/animals/Bugs/H-P/head-lice-two.jpg.adapt.945.1.jpg>>

<<http://lancaster.unl.edu/pest/images/lice/goodnit.jpg>>