

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Pediculosis (head lice) is a common problem in school-aged children. The main mode of transmission of head lice is contact with a person who is already infested (i.e., head-to-head contact). Contact is common during play (sports activities, playgrounds, at camp, and slumber parties). While it is a nuisance and inconvenient, having lice does not carry significant medical risks. Weekly checks at home are a great way to detect head lice early and to keep them from spreading. If you suspect or find head lice on your child, please contact your school nurse for assistance and advice. Here are some guidelines to follow:

Head Lice Facts

Anyone can get head lice no matter how clean they are.

Head lice do not carry disease. Secondary skin infections can occur from excessive scratching.

They cannot jump or fly and are spread by head to head contact.

Lice live for 1-2 days on pillows, furniture, stuffed animals, or clothes.

Head lice do not infest pets and pets do not spread head lice.

Ways To Prevent the Spread of Lice

Do not share combs, brushes, towels, hats, barrettes, sports uniforms, or pillows.

Avoid head to head contact with anyone suspected of having head lice.

Keep long hair up or pulled back.

What To Look For

Excessive scratching of the head, especially at the back of the head just above the neck.

Nits on the hair. These are usually pearly-grey in color and are attached to the hair shaft near the scalp. Nits are distinguished from dandruff because they stick to the hair shaft instead of flaking off when brushed.

Adult lice are about the size of a sesame seed. Lice are active at night so your child may have trouble sleeping.

What To Do If You Find Nits or Live Lice

Check all family members in the household.

Treat your child with a recommended lice shampoo following the package directions. Apply a second treatment when directed.

For alternative treatment options, talk to the school nurse.

Use a nit comb after the treatment to remove lice and nits from the hair shaft.

Continue to check the scalp and hair everyday and remove the nits for the next 2 weeks.

Machine wash and dry clothing worn in the previous 2 days and all bed linens. Use hot water at 130 degrees for 20 minutes and use high heat setting on the dryer. Dry clean items, as needed.

Place all non-washable items such as stuffed toys and pillows in a sealed plastic bag for at least 2 days.

Soak combs and brushes in hot water (at least 130 degrees) for 5-10 minutes. Do not share combs, brushes, and hair accessories with the person who has head lice.

Vacuum furniture, rugs and floors. Discard vacuum bag.

Do not use fumigant sprays or fogs. They are not necessary and can be toxic.

When Can Your Child Return to School?

Students found with head lice may remain in school for the remainder of the school day. The expectation is the student will be treated prior to returning to school the following day. Please have your student check in with the school nurse the day they return to school and one week after treatment.