



Head lice are a common problem in school-aged children. It is estimated that between 1–10% of students attending school can be affected at any time of the year in the US and Canada. Head lice cause no known illness and it is not a public health issue. Head lice management is ever-changing as new research is conducted and information is made available about prevention, treatment, and early detection.

The Laboratory Schools practices are based on recommendations from professional organizations such as the National Association of School Nurses, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the Centers for Disease Control. Our practices are also informed by collaborations among teachers, nurses, principals, and school leadership.

### TEACHER'S RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Be a prevention preacher.
- Identify students who may have head lice and refer to the School Nurse.
- Maintain confidentiality.
- Support evaluation and communication.
  - \* If head lice have been reported to a teacher, encourage the family to contact the School Nurse directly.
  - \* Follow up with the School Nurse to verify that the family has contacted the Nurse's Office.
  - \* Keep or add the topic of head lice in your newsletter as an ongoing reminder.

### ADMINISTRATOR'S RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Support a collaborative environment.
- Identify faculty or parent concerns.
- Problem-solve and utilize available resources.
- Maintain confidentiality.

### PARENT/GUARDIAN RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Check child(ren)'s head on a regular basis to identify cases of head lice as early as possible. Current recommendations are to check for head lice weekly throughout grade school years.
- Eliminate infestations.
- Report cases of head lice to the School Nurse in a timely manner.
- Initiate treatment the same day head lice are identified.
  - \* If head lice are identified at school, families are expected to begin treatment before returning to school.
  - \* It can take three weeks to completely eliminate head lice. Factors such as hair length, volume, curl, and color as well as the treatment used need to be considered.
  - \* If families have questions or concerns about head lice treatment, they should contact their health care providers.

### NURSE'S RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Identify and confirm head lice in suspected cases.
  - \* If lice or nits are found during a lice check, the initial check is complete and the family is notified and provided with treatment recommendations. (Please refer to appendix.)
  - \* The School Nurse will notify the teacher if lice is identified in their classroom.
  - \* Students will not be quarantined or excluded.
  - \* Confidentiality will be maintained.
  - \* For students in grades N–5:
    - If two or more cases are identified in the same classroom within a 10 day period, the School Nurse will notify affected classroom families, including Extended Day, and provide tips and pertinent information.
    - \* Head checks of entire classrooms will not be performed as current research has not supported this practice.
    - \* Teachers, staff, students, and family members are welcome to request a head check at any time given the School Nurse's availability.
- Support early identification and treatment.
  - \* After a student has been treated and returns to school, the School Nurse will conduct a head check upon return and re-check as needed. Feedback to the family will be given the same day.
  - \* Support an evidence-based approach to lice identification and treatment.
  - \* Be a prevention preacher.
  - \* Participate in a regular review of the research literature and disseminate information as needed.



## APPENDIX

Over the counter treatments and prescription medications:

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

Instructional videos for head checks and nit/lobe identification:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mAsfE8AWxzU>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hybe7quFRVU>

14-day treatment guide provided by the Iowa Department of Public Health:

<https://idph.iowa.gov/CADE/Disease-Information/HeadLice>

In-home nit-pickers and salon treatments:

Every major metropolitan area has a variety of for-profit treatment options. An internet search can help quickly identify these services, however they can be quite expensive but effective.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION:

American Academy of Pediatrics:

[Head Lice: What Parents Need to Know](#)

Centers for Disease Control:

<https://www.cdc.gov/parasites/lice/head/index.html>

National Association of School Nurses:

<https://www.nasn.org/nasn-resources/practice-topics/head-lice>

IdentifyUS website:

<https://identify.us.com/idmybug/head-lice/index.html>