

Helpful Information about Head lice

Though just the mention of lice makes many people uncomfortable, head lice cause no illness and are in no way a serious health hazard. More than anything, they are a nuisance. They are most common in children three to 12 years of age, and impact all socioeconomic groups. Lice do not jump or fly, but rather crawl and are mainly spread by direct head to head contact. They cannot live for long periods of time off of the scalp. They may be treated with over-the-counter pediculocides, eg. Nix, Rid, or “natural” treatments eg. Mayonnaise, Vaseline, coconut shampoo, tea tree oil. Only rarely is prescription medication required for treatment.

Our school personnel, including nurses and teachers are dedicated to reducing the risk of transmission of head lice within our schools. You may help their efforts by treating your child, when appropriate, and being vigilant with follow-up hair care including regular combing with a nit comb. Also, please notify your school nurse if you suspect that your child has lice. Because there exists a chance of indirect spreading through the sharing of personal items such as hats or combs, it is recommended that children be discouraged from sharing these items.

In keeping with the American Academy of Pediatrics recommendations regarding head lice, the district allows children back to school once treatment has begun. The existence of nits, even after treatment, is normal and does not indicate active infestation. As a result, we do not have a “no nit” policy in our schools.

You can find out more information about head lice by visiting the American Academy of Pediatrics website at www.aap.org. In the meantime, we have attached some information from the A.A.P. that you might find helpful. You can also find out more by visiting the Centers for Disease Control website at www.cdc.gov, as well as the website www.hsph.harvard.edu. We appreciate your assistance in helping us to deal with this nuisance and welcome any feedback you may have regarding this issue.

Sincerely,

Dr. Steven Levine, Physician Somers Central Schools

Scott Persampieri, Director of Instructional Services