



Health Services

Date: _____

Dear Parent or Guardian:

Your child was seen in the Health Room today with evidence of head lice. Lice are small, tan-colored wingless insects the size of a sesame seed that lay tiny, gray/white eggs (nits) in the hair close to the scalp. Lice do not cause or spread disease.

What are the symptoms of lice?

Symptoms include itching and scratching on the scalp, behind and around ears, and neck. Eggs (nits) may be glued to the hair shaft near the scalp. Sometimes the small, tan-colored wingless insects can be seen and/or felt moving in the hair.

How are lice spread?

Lice are spread by direct contact with the hair or headgear of a person with active lice, for example, during play at home, day care or school, slumber parties, sports activities or camp. Lice can only spread by crawling; they do not fly or jump. Less often, head lice are spread when a person shares combs, brushes, hats, blankets, or pillows with another person with lice. Lice can live only 1 to 2 days away from the scalp.

How is lice diagnosed and treated?

By carefully inspecting hair in bright light or with a bright light and a magnifying glass, lice and nits can be identified. There are a variety of treatments. Pesticides that kill lice and most eggs are available in drug and grocery stores. It is extremely important to follow the directions on the box. There is no evidence that home remedies using common products (e.g., salad oils, mayonnaise, Vaseline, mouth wash, hair dye) are effective. ***It is more important to comb the hair with a special nit comb to remove lice and nits daily for 2–3 weeks.***

How do you control the spread?

Family bed linens and recently used towels, clothes and hats that have been exposed to lice should be washed in a washer and dryer with a temperature of at least 130° F. Using hot water in a washer and drying on the hot setting kills lice. Toys, stuffed animals, and bedding that cannot be washed can be sealed in a plastic bag for at least 10 days; vacuum floors, carpets, mattresses and furniture. School staff promotes prevention by reminding students not to share coats, jackets, hats, hair brushes, etc.

When can my child return to school?

Your child may return to school the next school day after treatment. A staff member trained to do a lice exam will check your child's head to make sure there are no live lice and progress has been made on combing. An adult can bring the child to school to meet with the school staff on the return to school. Please contact the school Health Room or your health care provider if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Health Assistant

Phone