

General Information-Head Lice

Head lice should not be considered as a medical or public health hazard. Head lice are not known to spread disease. Head lice can be an annoyance because their presence may cause itching and loss of sleep. Sometimes the itching can lead to excessive scratching that can sometimes increase the chance of a secondary skin infection (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2015). Research has shown that the survival of head lice when not on the head is usually less than one day, and the eggs can only hatch when incubated by body heat found near the scalp (Devore et al., 2015; Centers for Disease Control, 2013).

Head lice move by crawling; they cannot hop or fly. Head lice are spread by direct contact with the hair of an infested person. Anyone who comes in head-to-head contact with someone who already has head lice is at greatest risk. Spread by contact with clothing (such as hats, scarves, coats) or other personal items (such as combs, brushes, or towels) used by an infested person is uncommon. Personal hygiene or cleanliness in the home or school has nothing to do with getting head lice (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2015).

There is no scientific evidence that home remedies are effective treatments. Parents/Guardians are encouraged to contact the student's physician for appropriate treatment options. Head lice do not infest the home or school buildings. However, family bed linens and recently used clothes, hats, and towels should be washed in very hot water and dried on the high setting (National Association of School Nurses, 2017).

USD #305 Procedure Regarding Head Lice/Suspected Head Lice

- Students will be checked for head lice by the school nurse at the request of the student's parent/guardian, the student, the student's teacher, or the school administrator(s).
- Parents/Guardians will be notified by the school nurse or school administrator via the contact information provided in Skyward if their student is found to have live head lice and/or viable nits.
- Students found to have live head lice and/or nits will not be excluded from school. KAR 28-1-6 no longer requires students to be excluded from school due to head lice or nits; nor is school exclusion supported by the American Academy of Pediatrics and the National Association of School Nurses (Kansas Department of Health and Environment, 2018).
- Students found to have live head lice/viable nits will go home at their regular end of the school day with the expectation that they will be treated by a parent/guardian at home that afternoon/evening and will return to school the next day.
- Classroom screenings for head lice **will not** be conducted and teachers/staff members **will not** check a student for head lice. Mass classroom/school notification of a head lice case **will not** occur (Devore et al., 2015).
- General head lice information will be provided by the school nurse but parents/guardians are encouraged to contact their student's physician for treatment recommendations.
- If the parent/guardian needs assistance with head lice treatment, they should contact their student's school nurse for available options.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2013). *Biology*. Retrieved from www.cdc.gov/parasites/lice/head/biology.html

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2015, September). *Frequently Asked Questions*. Retrieved from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: https://www.cdc.gov/parasites/lice/head/gen_info/faqs.html

Devore, C., Schutze, G., & The American Academy of Pediatrics' Council On School Health and Committee on Infectious Diseases. (2015). Head lice, *Pediatrics*. 135(5), e1355-e1365.

Kansas Department of Health and Environment. (2018, October). *Head Lice Regulations and Guidelines*. Retrieved from Kansas Department of Health and Environment: http://www.kdheks.gov/c-f/head_lice.htm

National Association of School Nurses. (2017, October). *Head Lice 101 What You Should Know About Head Lice*. Retrieved from National Association of School Nurses: <https://schoolnurseset.nasn.org/HigherLogic/System/DownloadDocumentFile.ashx?DocumentFileKey=6a1638d6-c24d-e100-b2cd-9ae5511dd675&forceDialog=0>