

*Manville Public Schools Health Offices
Manville, New Jersey*

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Information for Parents Regarding Lice

Head lice are a widely misunderstood “nuisance-type” health problem. Now that our students are spending more time indoors together, it is suggested that parents frequently check for lice.

What are head lice?

- Head lice are tiny (like sesame seeds), wingless, blood-feeding adult insects that feed on the human scalp and can’t survive for more than a day without blood.
- They do not infest animals.
- They do not fly or jump, but crawl at a high speed.
- They are not an indication of poor hygiene or parental neglect.
- Diagnosis is more often made on finding nits (eggs) attached to individual hairs.
- Nits (the egg stage) may be found in the hair, but are most often at the nape of the neck, behind the ears.

What signs should you look for?

- Persistent itching of the head and back of the neck.
- Scratch marks on the scalp
- Sometimes, small white specks such as dandruff can be confused with nits, but nits are difficult to remove while dandruff will brush away easily.

Where do lice come from?

- Head lice crawl from one head to another.
- The most common method is by direct head contact between two children.
- Transfer also occurs by sharing combs, brushes, helmets, phone earpieces and jackets.

How do I end head lice infestation?

1. **KILL THE LICE:** Use a lice killing shampoo recommended by your physician or pharmacist. This shampoo can be bought at a pharmacy or drug store. Follow the directions **exactly**. Retreat in 7-10 days to kill newly hatched lice that survived. Your child may return to school between treatments. Please continue to follow all instructions.
2. **REMOVE ALL EGGS:** This is the most important step. Up to 30% of the eggs may survive so they need to be combed out. The hair must be combed with the comb (provided in the shampoo box) for at least **10 days**. This can be a tedious job. Removing nits/lice works best when hair is wet when combing.
3. **CLEAN HOUSE:** Wash all clothing, towels and bed linens in hot (130 F) soapy water or dry-clean. Toys, stuffed animals, headsets, and unwashables should be tightly stored in plastic bags for 2 weeks. Vacuum furniture, mattresses, pillows, rugs, floors and your car.
4. **SEPARATE HOUSEHOLDS:** If your child divides his/her time between two homes, please discuss these procedures with the other parent to decrease the potential for lice transfer between homes.
5. **CLOTHING:** Please instruct your child to place his/her hat inside the coat sleeve.

REMEMBER to check all family members and treat them. It is important for all families to do a lice check at least once a week.

*** Advise your physician if you are pregnant before using any lice killing shampoo (pediculicide).

Please contact your school nurse with any questions or concerns.