

Guidelines For the Control and Treatment of Head Lice/Nits in School

Screening

- Current evidence based practice does not support exclusion of students for head lice, nor the efficacy and cost-effectiveness of classroom or school-wide screening for decreasing the incidence of head lice among school children.
- Mass screenings do not have any scientific basis for being done, and are not an effective of health room staff's time

Attendance

- "No-nits" policies that require a child to be free of nits before they can return to school are also not recommended.
- Students with diagnosed head lice should not be sent home from school early. Such students may go home at the end of the school day in the manner they are accustomed to and should be permitted to return to school after appropriate treatment is started.
- Exclusion from class or school is generally not warranted

Health Room

Head lice shall be treated as a medical issue deserving the same level of confidentiality as any other medical concern. Health room staff should follow the steps below:

1. Measures to avoid isolating or stigmatizing students with suspected or known/confirmed head lice shall be utilized. Check a student's head for lice if they are demonstrating symptoms, being sure to provide the student privacy.
2. Educate school staff regarding head lice causes, treatment and common misconceptions such as:
 - a. Getting head lice is not related to cleanliness of the person or his/her environment
 - b. Head lice are mainly spread by direct contact with the hair of an infected person
 - c. Head lice are not known to transmit disease
 - d. Head lice move by crawling, not hopping or flying
 - e. Head lice are not reportable to the public health departments unless there are other communicable disease related concerns
3. Educate students and their families about how to prevent lice and what to do if a family member has lice.
4. Collaborate with the Public Health Department or other resources in planning assistance to families who have chronic infestation.
5. The health room staff shall determine the appropriate course of action for each presentation of head lice on a case-by-case basis. This includes communication to parents and the classroom. There will be collaboration with and recommendations made to school administration.
6. In cooperation with the school nurse, the school administration shall assist in the proper education of parents and staff members about the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of head lice.

Treatment Protocol Recommendations

- Students with live head lice do not need to be sent home early from school; they can go home at the end of the day, be treated, and return to school following appropriate treatment.
- Students diagnosed with head lice should be discouraged from close direct head contact with others; however, they should not be removed from the classroom.
- The child's parent or legal guardian should be notified that day by telephone or email stating that prompt, proper treatment of this condition is in the best interest of the child and their classmates.
- There are many acceptable treatment options; however, treatment with a product that is both a pediculicide as well as ovicidal is the most sure way to kill lice and prevent further reinfestation.
- Students that have had no treatment or insufficient treatment will not be readmitted to the classroom the next day.

Additional Information

- [What is Lice?](#)
- [Head Lice Helpful Hints](#)
- [Head Lice Treatment Checklist](#)