EASTCONN
Where Learning Comes to Life

STUDENTS
Series 5000
Policy #5013.5.1

Pediculosis

EASTCONN is committed to maximizing students' academic performance and physical well-being in a healthy and safe environment. EASTCONN recognizes that head lice infestations do not pose a health hazard, are not a sign of uncleanliness, and are not responsible for the spread of any disease. However, archaic policies cause many unnecessary absences from school with potential negative effects on academic performance. Misinformation about head lice causes anxiety for parents/guardians and school staff. The foals of providing a healthy and safe environment for students with head lice are to (1) maximize academic performance; and (2) minimize absences due to unnecessary exclusion from school of students with head lice.

Screening

Based on recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, EASTCONN recognizes that school-wide screening for nits alone is not an accurate way of predicting which children will become infested with head lice, and screening for live lice has not been proven to have a significant decrease on the incidence of head lice in a school community.

EASTCONN's medical advisor will periodically provide information to families of all children on the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of head lice. Parents are encouraged to check their children's heads for lice if the child is symptomatic. EASTCONN's medical advisor may check a student's head if the student is demonstrating symptoms.

Management on the Day of Diagnosis

EASTCONN recognizes that head lice infestation poses little risk to others and does not result in additional health problems. The management of pediculosis should proceed so as to not disrupt the education process. Nonetheless, any staff members who suspects a student has head lice will report this to the school nurse or the Principal. Students known to have head lice will remain in the class provided the student is comfortable. If a student is not comfortable, he/she may report to the school nurse or the Principal's office. Such students will be discouraged from close direct head contact with others and from sharing personal items with other students. EASTCONN employees will act to ensure that student confidentiality is maintained in order to avoid embarrassment.

The Principal or the school nurse will notify the parent/guardian by telephone or other available means if their child is found to have head lice. Verbal and written instructions for treatment will be given to the family of each identified student. Based upon the school nurse's recommendation, other children who were most likely to have had direct head-to-head contact with the assessed child may be screened for head lice.

Appendix

Connecticut Department of Public Health: head Lice – Fact Sheet

1. **What are head lice?**
   Head lice are blood sucking parasites. They area approximately the size of a sesame seed, 1-2mm. They do not have wings and, therefore, cannot fly. They also do not jump. They do, however, move quickly. The eggs of the louse, which are called "nits", are teardrop shaped and approximately half the size of the adult louse. The nits are attached to the hair shaft with a waterproof, cement-like substance from the adult female. Thus, nits cannot be simply washed or brushed out of the hair.

2. **Who can get head lice?**
   Anyone who comes in contact with louse infested items can get head lice. Some people think lice become established on persons who are unclean. This is not true. Frequent bathing will neither prevent head lice nor eliminate an infestation once it has become established.

3. **How are head lice spread?**
   Head lice are usually transmitted through close personal contact with another infested individual or through use of common combs, brushes, and other grooming aids; through sharing hats, caps, and coats; or through co-mingling of these items at the homes of friends, at school, at church, or other public places.

4. **What are symptoms of head lice?**
   The major symptoms of head lice is itching, which is due to the presence of salivary fluid produced by the insect as it feeds.

5. **How do you eliminate head lice?**
   Treatment is directed at the infested individual and his personal articles (e.g., caps, combs, brushes, towels and bedding). Fumigation or use of insecticides in the home, school, or school buses is not recommended.

   A. Individual Treatment
   Individual treatment usually requires using an over-the-counter (OTC) or prescription medication and a nit (head lice egg) comb.

   ***Warning:** Do not use a crème rinse or combination shampoo/conditioner before using lice medicine. Do not re-wash hair for 1-2 days after treatment.*

   Follow these treatment steps:

   - *Before application of the OTC or prescription treatment, remove all clothing from the waist up.*
   - *Apply the lice medicine according to label instructions. If your child has hair longer than shoulder length, you may need to use two bottles. It is important to pay special attention to instructions on the bottle regarding how long the medication should be left on and whether rinsing the hair is recommended after treatment.*
   - *After treatment, have the infected person put on clean clothing.*

- *Nit combs, often found in lice medicine packages, should be used to comb nits and lice from the hair shaft. Many flea combs made for cats and dogs are also effective.*
- *After treatment, check the hair every 2-3 days and comb with a nit comp to remove nits and lice as necessary. Continue to check for 2-3 weeks until you are sure all lice and nits are gone.*
- *If an OTC medicine was used, retreat in 7-10 days. If the prescription drug malathion was used, retreat in 7-10 days only if crawling bugs are found.*

B. Decontamination of Personal Articles and Environment

***Treat the household*:** *If head lice fall off of a person and cannot feed, they will not survive very long. It is not necessary to spend a lot of time or money on housecleaning activities. You can help avoid re-infestation by lice that may have recently fallen off the hair or crawled onto clothing or furniture by following these steps.*

1. *To kill lice and nits, all washable clothing and bed lines that the infested person wore or used during the 2 days before treatment should be machine washed in hot water (130^0F). After the hot wash, the laundry should be dried at high heat for at least 20 minutes.*
2. *For clothing that is not washable, have it dry cleaned (e.g. coats, hats, scarves).*
3. *All clothing, stuffed animals, comforters, etc that cannot be washed or dry cleaned can be stored for 2 weeks in a plastic bag this is sealed with tape.*
4. *Combs and brushes can be soaked for 1 hour in rubbing alcohol, Lysol*, or wash with sap and hot (130F) water.*
5. *Vacuum the floor and furniture. There is a small risk of getting re-infested from a louse that has fallen onto the carpet or onto a sofa. Vacuum the places where the infested person usually sits or lays, spending a lot of time on this is not necessary./do not use fumigant sprays; they can be toxic if inhaled or absorbed through the skin.*

**Lysol is a registered trademark. The mention of this product does not constitute an endorsement by the CT Department of Health.*

*C***. Prevent Re-infestation**

The most common way to spread lice is through direct head-to-head contact. It is less likely for lice to spread by crawling onto clothing or belongings. To control head lice outbreaks in a community, school or camp setting, children can be taught to avoid activities that are likely to spread lice.

1. *Avoid head-to-head contact during play at school and at home (on a playground, sleep over party, camp, sports outing).*
2. *Do not share any items that may have had contact with someone else's head (e.g., hats, scarves, hair ribbons, coats, sports uniforms).*
3. *Do not share combs, brushes, or towels.*
4. *If you are aware that someone has a lice infestation, do not lie on beds, couches, pillows, carpets, or stuffed animals that the infested person may have had contact with.*

This fact sheet is for informational purposes only. It should not be used for self-diagnosis or as a

substitute for consultation with a health care provider. If you think that you may have this infection, or have questions about the disease described above, you should consult your health care provider.

For additional information on this disease, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Website.

Adopted:11/23/21
Revised:
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Form #1

SAMPLE LETTER FOR NOTIFICATION OF PEDICULOSIS IN SCHOOL
(to be typed on individual school letterhead)

To All Parents:

This week a few cases of PEDICULOSIS or HEAD LICE have appeared on our school. Pediculosis is often a fact of life for school-aged children. While inconvenient, head lice causes no medical harm and can be effectively treated. Head lice are not a health hazard or a sign of poor hygiene. In contract, to body lice, head lice are not responsible for the spread of any disease. Therefore, no healthy child should be excluded from or miss school because of head lice.

Pediculosis usually is transmitted from one infected child to another by direct contact with the hair. Personal items like combs, brushes, towels, and bedding are other frequent sources of infestation. Clothing, such as hats, ribbons, scarves, topcoats, and sweaters, provide excellent transportation from one individual to another.

Students at school have had their hair checked by the school nurse or nurse's aide. It would, however, be helpful if you also check your child's hair. Although the lice are difficult to see, you can identify them by a close inspection, possibly aided by a hand lens, which may reveal small, ivory colored eggs attached to individual hairs. In checking the scalp, pay particular attention to the back of the head and the area behind the ears. Another telltale sign is a persistent itch of the scalp, often accompanied by infected scratch marks or what appears to be a rash.

If you find anything in your child's hair that looks suspicious to you, please call your physician or the school nurse for consultation. Although there are over the counter shampoos, we would advise you to contact your physician and consider a prescription shampoo that appears to be the most effective in controlling head nits and lice. This is being suggested not only to protect your child but also the other students in the building. If you wish to learn more about pediculosis there is literature regarding pediculosis available at the school.

Once again, I want to strongly stress that pediculosis is a common occurrence in any school system and the few cases that we currently have are under control. I thank you for your cooperation, and if you have any questions or concerns contact the school nurse, _____ at the _____school.

Sincerely,

_____
School Principal's Signature