

Helpful Facts About Head Lice...

- Head lice are VERY common in children ages 3 to 12 years and are found more commonly in girls than boys.
- Having head lice doesn't equal poor hygiene practices.
- Head lice have existed for many centuries and do NOT spread disease, although they are a major nuisance.
- Live lice can only live one to two days when not on an individual's head.
- Live lice CRAWL, they cannot jump or fly.
- A nit is simply a louse's egg; the egg must hatch, which takes about 10 days, in order to produce a live louse. Nits found more than $\frac{1}{4}$ inch down the hair shaft are usually considered non-viable (they will not hatch).
- Direct head to head contact with an infested individual is the most common way to get head lice. Less likely is contracting head lice through sharing personal items such as combs, brushes, headphones, and hats.
- Lice can be transmitted easily between family members, close play mates, during sleep overs, and at camps.
- Seeking prompt and proper treatment is essential in eliminating an active case of head lice.
- Head lice are not as contagious as you may think...a child typically has head lice for 4 to 6 weeks before it is identified (this is the length of time it takes for a person to develop a sensitivity to the saliva of a head louse; this sensitivity is what causes the head itching and scratching). After 4 to 6 weeks of an individual being infested with head lice, one would expect that the entire classroom would have head lice and this is rarely the case.
- It is much easier to contract a common cold than it is to get head lice.



Helpful Tips to Prevent the Spread of Head Lice...

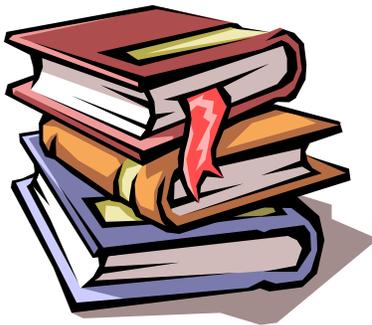


- Become familiar with the signs and symptoms to look for in a child with head lice (i.e. a child continuously scratching their head, sores on a child's head caused by scratching, the presence of live lice and nits close to the child's scalp).
- Check your child's head daily for live lice and nits. Live lice are usually few in number, can move quickly and are hard to detect. The most common areas to find lice are behind the ears, at the crown of the head, and at the base of the neck. Consult with the school nurse as to how to properly check your child's head and to review exactly what a head louse and a nit look like. A louse is about the size of a sesame seed and is tan to brownish-red in color. A nit is small, yellow or gray-white in color, and oval-shaped. Nits are not easily removed from the hair shaft, they are usually "glued" tightly which is unlike dandruff, gel, or hairspray remnants that can easily be removed.

- Remind your child not to share personal items such as hats, combs/brushes, headphones, and scarves.
- Encourage your child to do their best to avoid direct head to head contact with other children (this is the most common way head lice are spread from one individual to another).
- Consider having your child with long hair wear their hair back in a pony-tail.
- Place hats, scarves, gloves in a child's zipped back pack or in the sleeves of a child's jacket as this can be helpful in preventing the spread of head lice.

Head Lice Treatment Measures...

- Consult with your child's health care provider for treatment options/recommendations as soon as head lice have been identified on your child's head. Following product package instructions and your doctor's recommendations are a must.
- Notify the school nurse if your child has been treated for head lice. A child who has active head lice should be properly treated before they return to school and should see the school nurse daily for head checks.
- Vacuum all rugs, carpets, car upholstery, and furniture daily for 10 days; starting with the day your child is identified with and treated for head lice through the second head lice treatment (typically given 7 to 10 days after the first treatment).
- Wash all bedding, clothes, hats, and scarves on a hot cycle and dry clothes on a high heat setting for at least 30 minutes. This should be done after head lice have been identified on your child (one time should be sufficient unless you are still seeing active live lice).
- Wash all combs, brushes, and hair accessories in hot soapy water or soak in rubbing alcohol or Lysol for one hour.
- All non-washable items can be placed in a sealed plastic bag for 2 weeks.
- Check your child's head daily at home for the presence of live lice and nits. Fine comb the hair and remove all nits found. Let the school nurse know if you discover any live lice and/or nits.
- If multiple cases of head lice have been detected in your child's classroom, we would ask that you send in a plastic bag for your child's belongings to be stored in during the school day.



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