

## Pediculosis (Head Lice)

Lice outbreaks are not uncommon among school children and the cleanest child can easily become infected. Do not panic if you find that your child has been infested with lice. Head lice do not spread disease. Head lice do not jump from head-to-head or head-to-surface. It takes head-to-head contact and surface contact in order for lice to move to a new host. While treating lice can be time consuming but head lice is not a chronic health problem.

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### What should you look for when checking for lice?

When there is intense itching and scratching of the scalp and the back of the neck, look closely at the scalp for small, whitish eggs firmly attached to the hair shaft, especially at the nape of the neck and above the ears. Although these eggs may look like dandruff, dandruff can easily be removed from the hair while the eggs cannot. The eggs will need much more work to be removed from the hair shaft.



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### What should you do if louse/nits are found?

1. Notify the school nurse if you confirm lice or eggs/nits. Your child will need to be examined by the building nurse before re-entry into school. If your child was found to have louse/nits while in school, you will be notified by the building nurse to come to school to pick-up your child. Siblings in the district will also be examined and will need picked up if they are also found to have lice/nits. You will be asked, upon return to school, that your child does not take the bus but is brought in by their family member so that the nurse can check their head to be sure that there are no live louse or nits. Your child may return to school if no louse or nits are found. Nit removal is the responsibility of the child's parent/guardian and not the school nurse.
2. If members of your family become infested, you may treat them with an over the counter pediculosis product from your drugstore, or you may contact your Health Care Provider or your

Pharmacist for their recommendation. Remember to read directions thoroughly on any product used. Some products recommend another treatment in two weeks.

3. After treatment, the nits or eggs should be removed from the hair. There is a comb included in most treatment packages, but often, the easiest method of removal is using your nails and pulling the egg off of the hair shaft. You should make sure you have plenty of light, positioning yourself by a window for ease of identification of the nit. Section off hair if the hair being treated is thick and long. This will help the process of pulling/combing the nits off the hair shaft. The nits, as shown in the picture above, look like a small tear drops and are "cemented" on the hair shaft with the tip of the tear shape pointing toward the scalp.

4. Wash all personal clothing (*including jackets, scarves, hats and backpacks*) and bedding (*sheets, blankets, pillowcases*) in hot water (at least 130 degrees F.) or send for dry cleaning. Vacuum the mattress. We also recommend changing the pillowcase nightly for the following two weeks.

5. Thoroughly wash combs and brushes in hot water to disinfect.

6. Thoroughly vacuum furniture, rugs, and car interiors.

7. Place all stuffed toys and throw pillows (*or any item too large to wash/dry clean*) in a plastic bag for two weeks. This is recommended because it takes 7-10 days for a nit to hatch and 7-10 more days for a louse to mature and lay more eggs.

The District's goals are for head lice to have minimal disruption to a students' educational experiences and minimize the stigmatizing impact on students and families.

The following sites can offer more information for you and your family while treating an infestation of pediculosis/head lice:

**Web MD:**

<http://www.webmd.com/children/ss/slideshow-lice-overview>

**Head Lice 101:**

[https://higherlogicdownload.s3.amazonaws.com/NASN/3870c72d-fff9-4ed7-833f-215de278d256/UploadedImages/PDFs/Lice%20Lessons/LL\\_May\\_101\\_SN.pdf](https://higherlogicdownload.s3.amazonaws.com/NASN/3870c72d-fff9-4ed7-833f-215de278d256/UploadedImages/PDFs/Lice%20Lessons/LL_May_101_SN.pdf)

**American Academy of Pediatrics:**

<https://www.aap.org/en-us/about-the-aap/aap-press-room/Pages/AAP-Offers-Updated-Guidance-on-Treating-Head-Lice.aspx>

**Centers for Disease Control (CDC):**

<https://www.cdc.gov/parasites/lice/head/index.html>