



PEDICULOSIS - HEAD LICE

Pediculosis is a common problem in school-aged children. Head lice poses no real health risk to the population and is viewed as no more than a nuisance by health care professionals. However, since the condition can be transmitted to others, proper and successful treatment is essential. Our goal is to educate the students and parents on proper identification and elimination of head lice and nits as quickly as possible to minimize interruption of classroom time.

POLICY: Any student found to have evidence of head lice infestation is to be excluded from school until proper treatment for lice has been completed.

PROCEDURE:

- Any student suspected of having head lice should be sent to the health room for inspection by the school health staff
- If the student has evidence of head lice the following steps will be taken:
 1. Siblings will be called to health room for head check
 2. Parents/guardians will be contacted to take child/ren home for treatment
 3. Information on chemical and non chemical treatment options will be given to the parent/guardian
- Notice will be sent out to the affected classroom/s as soon as possible. Classroom checks are not done for individual cases. As a guideline, 3 active cases in a classroom within a week may be cause for a classroom screening.

- **Re-entry to school** will be allowed once student is inspected by school health staff
 - Parents must tell the school nurse which treatment option was chosen (chemical or non chemical).
 - If the student has been treated **with a chemical treatment** (medicated shampoo), s/he will be allowed to return with nits provided that the parent/guardian continue to remove the nits daily. Daily inspections will be conducted by school staff to ensure this procedure is being followed
 - If the student has **not used a chemical treatment**, all lice and eggs (nits) must be removed before reentry into the classroom.

A no nit policy may be instituted by the school nurse in the case of a persistent infestation or evidence of lack of compliance to this policy. The school nurse will consult with the building principal and nursing supervisor before excluding the student from school.

TREATMENT OF INDIVIDUAL

Chemical treatment with the use of a medicated shampoo is an option. This decision should be made after consulting your health care provider. Manual removal is necessary with either treatment option.

Chemical Treatment

- Apply as directed. Follow directions on package insert carefully.
- Do not apply in bathtub or shower. Apply over sink to minimize the exposure of the chemical to the rest of the body. Avoid contact with the eyes.
- Do not use the products on babies or pregnant women
- Do not treat individuals who do not have evidence of head lice

Manual Removal

- Sit in comfortable chair with a good source of light (natural sunlight is preferred)
- Thoroughly clean and comb out hair removing all tangles and debris
- Work on one section of the hair at a time.
- Comb each section away from scalp using a fine tooth metal comb
- Clean off the comb after each stroke to remove any caught lice or eggs
- Repeat this technique throughout the head carefully inspecting the hair
- Remove nits with fingernails or safety scissors if nits remain after several attempts with the comb

TREATMENT OF PERSONAL ARTICLES AND CLOTHING

Heat is lethal to lice and their eggs, therefore, many personal articles can be disinfected by machine washing in **HOT water** and/or machine drying, using the hot cycle of the dryer. Non-washable items may be disinfected in the dryer, provided that heat will not harm them. If total reliance is placed on the clothes dryer for disinfection, dry articles for at least 20 minutes at the high heat setting.

1. Machine wash all washable clothing and bed linens that have been in contact with the infested individual within the previous three days.
2. Non-washable items can be vacuumed, dry-cleaned or placed in a plastic bag and sealed for 14 days.
3. Combs, brushes, similar items can be disinfected by soaking them in one of the pediculicide shampoos for one hour or by soaking them in a pan of water heated on the stove to about 150 degrees for 5 – 10 minutes (caution: heat may damage some combs and brushes.
4. Because lice can live only a short time if they fall off the head, environmental clean up is limited to simple vacuuming of carpets, upholstered furniture, etc. Use of insecticides or fumigants on upholstered furniture, carpets, bedding, etc. is not recommended.

For more information about head lice and tips for successful treatment please refer to the following websites:

National Pediculosis Association at www.headlice.org
Harvard School of Public Health at www.hsph.harvard.edu/headlice.html