

How To Determine If Your Child Has Head Lice

Where to look

- close to the scalp
- behind the ears
- the back of the neck
- top of the head
- along the hair shaft

What to look for

- one of the first signs is itching and scratching the head
- adult lice are hard to see and may be different sizes
- the nits or eggs are easier to see
- nits are firmly attached to the hair close to the scalp
- nits are cream or tan-colored and are oval in shape
- nits may look like dandruff but they cannot be flicked off the hair

How to check

- Spend a few minutes every week checking your child's head. This should continue until the head lice problem is controlled.
- If there is a case in your child's class, check daily for 2 weeks.
- Good lighting is important
- Look for nits by parting in small sections going from one side of the head to the other. Check carefully, looking close to the scalp.

How can Head Lice be treated?

- Wash the child's head with a water-based regular shampoo (shampoo without additives such as fruit, vegetables, protein or conditioner) before treating with the lice shampoo. Dish soap works well.
- Follow the lice shampoo's directions carefully as some lice products are applied to damp hair while others are applied to dry hair.
- Do not treat anyone with a lice shampoo unless you find lice or nits in their hair. All family members (adults and children) must be checked if one member had head lice.
- Treat the hair with a lice shampoo or lice cream rinse such as Nix, Kwellada or R.C., following the directions on the package. Use the recommended dose. Usually the whole bottle should be used for a single treatment for one person.
- Section the hair like corn row, pin back and make a part. Pour a stream of the lice shampoo down the part and rub across the scalp, making sure that the shampoo is massaged into the hair and scalp. Thicker, curly hair should be given extra care to work in the shampoo and the shampoo can be left on for a longer period (usually double the time). You may need to use 2 bottles if the hair is thick or long.
- Manitoba Health is recommending two treatments, seven days apart. If live lice are found 24 to 48 hours after the first treatment or if you think the treatment has failed, please call your local Public Health Nurse.

- It is probably useful to remove as many nits as possible. Nit removal helps to get rid of nits that may hatch and makes it easier to see any new infestations. Nit removal is a tedious process and they are not easily removed. Part the hair into 4 sections and work through each section with a nit comb (available at a drug store) or your fingers to remove them. Put the nits in a bag, tie it up and throw it out.
- Nit removal will take time but it is the most important time. Checking for nits and nit removal should be done daily for 14 days.

How to clean your household

- Major clean up of the house is not necessary as lice and nits do not survive very long off the scalp. Avoid using insecticide sprays to get rid of lice as they can be harmful to people and pets.
- Focus the clean up on the personal belongings of a person with head lice.
- Clothing and bedding can be disinfected by machine washing or drying, using hot cycles. For clothing and bedding that cannot be washed in very hot water and alternate method to kill the lice is to place the article in the freezer for 48 hours. Combs and brushes should be soaked in very hot water or a solution of 1-teaspoon ammonia to 2 cups of water for 15 minutes.
- Freezing in a garbage bag also works. Place clothing in a sealed bag for 24 hours at minus 20.
- If your child had head lice, he or she may return to school after the first treatment is given.

Head lice can be best controlled through the cooperation of parents, teachers, and public health personnel.

Please call the school or the Public Health Nurse at 938-5363 for further information or assistance.



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Andy Zarrillo
Principal

Dino Busceti
Vice-Principal

DATE:

Dear Parents:

There has been a case of head lice reported in your child's class. Therefore, at this time, Public Health is recommending that you check your child's head today and on a regular basis.

The fact sheet has been prepared by Public Health to help parents understand what they can do to prevent head lice from becoming a problem for their children and community. At this time, there appears to be an increase in head lice cases in some schools, day cares and the community. It is not unusual for head lice to be more common at certain times of the year and head lice are always presented in the community (like the common cold).

If you suspect that your child has head lice please notify the school.

Sincerely,

Andy Zarrillo
Principal

FACTS ABOUT HEAD LICE

What are Head Lice?

Head Lice are tiny insects that live on the scalp. These insects lay eggs, called nits, which stick close to the scalp on the hair shaft. Although head lice do not cause disease, their presence is troublesome and can cause emotional stress.

How are Head Lice Spread?

Head Lice are spread by direct head to head contact with someone who has lice. Lice can also be spread indirectly through contact with such items as hats, combs, hair brushes, helmets and headphones that have been in recent, direct contact with the lice on a human head.

Head Lice are not spread because children have not washed properly. You cannot get them from animals or pets. Head Lice cannot jump or fly but they do come from close contact with a person who has them.