



## Columbus City Schools Health, Family and Community Services

### HEAD LICE INFORMATION

Head lice is a common problem among young children. Although a nuisance, it is not a serious condition and can be successfully treated.

**How do you get it?** By close contact with someone who has lice or by using their brushes, combs or hats.

**What to look for:** Head lice are tiny grayish white insects. **They cannot fly or jump**, but can crawl. Sometimes lice are difficult to find in a child's hair. The lice eggs (nits) are much easier to see. They are about the size of a pinhead, shaped like a teardrop and vary in color. Nits are tightly attached to a single hair shaft and cannot be washed or brushed out. They are commonly found in the hair at the back of the neck or behind the ears.

**Types of treatment:** There are medicated shampoos available for head lice. Check with a doctor, pharmacist or your school nurse for further information. Most products are available over the counter and are easily obtained. There are also a variety of combs on the market that are specially designed to help with the nit removal.

#### **How do you get rid of it?**

1. Wash your child's hair with the chosen medicated solution. Follow the instructions carefully. Some types are applied to **dry hair**.
2. A second treatment is needed in 7-10 days. **DO NOT** use these solutions more often than recommended because they can be harmful to your child's health. Also, these solutions **WILL NOT** prevent lice. They should not be used on a regular basis, only when live, crawling bugs are found.
3. You will need to comb the nits (eggs) from your child's hair with a lice comb. This requires a good light source such as a lamp or sunny window. Spread the hair in a fanning motion to observe the entire length of the hair. Nits may also be removed by running your finger and thumb down the hair shaft. This may be necessary because the nit combs may not remove all the nits. Removing nits requires lots of patience. If you need help in identifying nits, consult your school nurse.
4. All family members and household contacts of your child should be checked for lice. This is very important. People of any age can get lice, including adults and babies. Everyone over 2 years old with live bugs must also be treated with the medicated solution on the same day. Frequent checking by parents is recommended. If your child has lice, check the child daily for 2 weeks. Comb out any remaining nits that are seen. Then check weekly.

#### **Taking care of your home:**

1. All washable clothing and bed linens that have been worn or used in the past 24 hours should be washed in hot water and dried in a dryer at high heat for 20 minutes.
2. Things that cannot be washed and dried may be dry cleaned or simply left in a plastic bag for 10 days. This works for toys and stuffed animals.

3. Combs and brushes can be cleaned by soaking them in the medicated solution or by putting them in hot water. CAUTION: Heat may damage some combs and brushes.
4. Sprays are NOT recommended and can be harmful to your family. Head lice do not want to leave the head & it would be very rare for a louse to be on a piece of furniture or in the carpet. Focus your efforts on the head. Do not waste time, effort and money on exhaustive cleaning or sprays. Simple vacuuming of areas that may have been in direct contact with the head such as car head rests, sofas & chairs or child car seats is all that is necessary.

**Notifying others:**

Households where your child may have spent the night or extended periods of time (like a babysitter's house) should be notified to check heads. Only those found to have active infestations should be treated. Please call your child's school to inform us if you find head lice. It will help us to monitor incidence school wide.

**Returning to school:**

Your child should return to school the next school day, after treatment and combing. The school nurse or another staff member trained in the procedure will check your child's head to make sure there are no live bugs and progress has been made on combing. An adult must accompany the child to school to meet with the nurse or staff member on the return to school. The process of nit removal may take a few days. Continue combing daily and remove any nits found.

The school nurse is at \_\_\_\_\_ school \_\_\_\_\_ phone on:

Monday	am____	pm ____	Thursday	am____	pm____
Tuesday	am____	pm____	Friday	am____	pm____
Wednesday	am____	pm____			