



Head Lice Procedure

Identification and Management in School

1. Notify school nurse if a student is suspected of having head lice.
2. School Nurse or Health Tech at that school will check the student for lice.

How to Check for Head Lice:

- Be in a well lit room
- It is not necessary to wear gloves, but if lice/nits are found, the RN/HT must wash his/her hands after examining the student.
- The wooden end of a cotton swab may be used to separate the hair into sections.
- Often living lice are present behind the ears or at the nape of the neck. They crawl very fast and are difficult to see.
- Nits are gray/white in color and are attached to the hair shaft anywhere along the shaft. They are “cemented” on so will not fall off as dry scalp would. They are usually found about ¼” from the scalp.
- If only nits are found, the student will need treatment, but may not have an active case of head lice. Exclusion from school is not recommended.

A. Student has No Evidence of Head Lice—May return to class and teacher is notified.

B. Student with Initial Case of Head Lice evidenced by nits &/or living lice.

1. School Nurse or Health Tech, under the direction of the school nurse, will notify parent/guardian.
2. The child may be allowed to finish the school day, however, it is advisable for parent/guardian to pick their child up as soon as they are able so treatment can be started.
3. Send home **Parent Guidelines for Treatment of Head Lice and Head Lice Checklist**, stressing to follow guidelines exactly.
4. Upon returning to school after treatment, child is to be checked by the health tech or school nurse to confirm no evidence of live lice exists.
5. At the discretion of the school nurse, student may be checked as needed after treatment.
 - a. If live bugs are visible, parents will be notified that treatment must be repeated. The child may be allowed to finish the school day, however, it is advisable for parent/guardian to pick their child up as soon as they are able so treatment can be repeated. Reinforce the need to follow the guidelines for home cleaning tasks.
 - b. If only nits are present, parent will be instructed to remove those at home. Student will be allowed to stay in school.
6. Weekly checking may be recommended for a total of 3-4 weeks from initial treatment because of the life cycle of lice.
7. If at any time during the rechecking period, living lice are noted, the steps as listed above are to be repeated.



Head Lice Procedure

C. Classroom Management of Head Lice (this page may be given to classroom teacher)

***Due to confidentiality laws, names of students with head lice cannot be shared with students or guardians.**

1. Classroom checks will be done at the discretion of the school nurse if at least 2-3 students are identified with a positive case in the same class. Per CDPHE infectious disease guidelines: individual Cases are not reportable.
2. Siblings at the school or friends, who have had recent close contact, may be checked.
3. To prevent spread from clothing/furniture/carpet:
 - a. Hang coats on the back of the student's chair each day, OR place student's coat into a plastic bag and tie shut prior to hanging on the coat hooks outside of the classroom or place bagged coat under the student's chair.
 - b. This should be done until the head lice cases have resolved.
 - c. Avoid having stuffed toys or pillows in the classroom. Those items that have been in the classroom prior to the infestation need to be placed in trash bags and sealed for 2-3 weeks or washed and dried in a hot dryer or dry-cleaned.
 - d. Remove any upholstered furniture in the classroom.
 - e. Notify custodian to vacuum &/or shampoo carpets thoroughly in that classroom.
4. At the discretion of the nurse/principal, send home the **simplified Head Lice** information sheet along with a cover note from the school nurse to students in classroom that are affected, so parents are informed and know how to check their child and what to look for.
5. Information to share with classrooms to prevent further transmission:
 - a. Instruct the children not to share combs, brushes, hair accessories or caps/hats or wigs.
 - b. Discourage sharing pillows, play clothes, costumes, etc. Items such as pillows, costumes, etc which have been shared in the classroom need to be sealed in plastic bags for 3 weeks.
 - c. If use of headphones is necessary, use a separate set for students who have head lice or briskly wipe the set with a wet wipe after it is used by a student with lice.
 - d. Talk to students about teasing/ridicule.
6. PSD bussing that is already provided for a student to and from school can be continued even if the student is being treated for an active case of lice.



Student Services

Head Lice Procedure

IV-20b

Facts About Head Lice

- Personal hygiene is not a complete safeguard against head lice.
- Having head lice does not mean a person is unclean.
- Transmission can be direct from person to person through close physical contact.
- Pets cannot transmit head lice.
- Head lice cannot jump or fly. They crawl. They can be transmitted indirectly through shared objects such as hairbrushes, combs, hair accessories, caps/hats, sheets, pillowcases, etc.
- Lice are tiny, gray-tan insects that live on the scalp, particularly behind the ears and at the nape of the neck.
- One adult louse can make up to 10 eggs in 24 hours. The eggs are called nits.
- Nits are gray-white in color, are attached to the hair shaft usually close to the scalp, with cement-like material that make them hard to get off. They can't be flicked off. They are half the size of the head of a pin.
- Adult lice will die within 2 days when removed from the human host. **Lice eggs (nits), even when off of the human host can hatch within 7-14 days.**
- Thorough environmental cleaning is necessary to completely rid the household of the infection.
- To treat head lice properly, you must have access to a washing machine, clothes dryer and vacuum cleaner.
- Only 75% of the nits are killed by the use of lice shampoo. The other 25% still have the potential to hatch and the cycle is restarted.
- **Removal of ALL nits is the only way to completely end the cycle.**

IV-20c 11.29.11

http://www.cdphe.state.co.us/dc/Epidemiology/manual/School_Guidelines.pdf

<http://www.cdc.gov/parasites/lice/head/>