



Tips for Checking for Head Lice



Checking your child's hair at home on a regular basis is recommended since the spread of lice happens with close head to head contact, as occurs most often in the family household, on campouts or sleep-ins. This is especially important since head lice notifications will not be sent home every time a student with head lice is discovered at school. Mass screening of classrooms will also not be done to prevent the disruption of instruction.



The existence of head lice is most often detected through the presence of adult lice or the nits (eggs) on a child's hair. Pruritus or itching is a most common symptom of lice infestation. Other symptoms include a tickling feeling or sensation of something moving in the hair, irritability or sleeplessness, and sores caused by scratching. These sores can sometimes become infected from the normal bacteria found on the skin and hands.

The presence of head lice is not a serious medical condition, but needs diligent parental cooperation to control.

What to look for:

If you look closely at the scalp you may see the following characteristics:

- Head lice are very small, crawling insects approximately 1/8 inches long (size of a sesame seed).
- Head lice do not fly or jump. They crawl from person to person through direct contact.
- Nits (eggs) range in color from brown to grayish-white, are tear-drop shaped, and are attached to the hair strand. Nits that contain lice are found very close to the scalp.
- Nits are most frequently found at the nape of the neck, behind the ears, and/or under ponytails (it is recommended that all hair clips, ponytails and/or braids be removed to check for lice). Removal of the eggs (nits) with a fine tooth comb is recommended during treatment.
- Nits can be differentiated from hair care residue. Nits are firmly cemented to the hair strand and cannot be brushed or flicked out of the hair. Hair care residue (hair spray, gel, dandruff) can be easily removed from the hair.

If head lice or nits are found in your child's hair, please notify your school nurse as soon as possible for further guidance and information regarding treatment and care. Your pharmacist or health care provider may be contacted for treatment options. Any treatment should not be initiated unless there is a clear presence of living lice. Manufacturer's instructions regarding treatment should be carefully followed.



We appreciate your continued close inspection of your child's hair on a regular basis.