

QUINCY SCHOOL DISTRICT # 172

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONTROL OF HEAD LICE PARENT LETTER

Date: _____

RE: _____

Your child was found to have live lice in their hair today. This is an easily treated condition. This letter explains head lice and its treatment.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Head Lice (*pediculus humanus capitis*) are parasites that are transferred from one person to another by direct contact with an infested person's head, or by contact with personal items such as hats, hairbrushes, or bedding. Contrary to popular belief, lice do not jump from one host to another, they crawl.

Lice infestation may occur in any age category, but it is most frequent among preschool and grade school children. Most parents have the impression that lice become established on persons who are unclean. In the case of head lice, this is not always true. Frequent bathing will neither prevent head lice nor eliminate an infestation once it has become established.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

Head lice are elongated insects that are grayish tan in color. They are approximately 1/16 inch long. Lice move very quickly making it very difficult to find them in the hair. Because lice crawl the diagnosis of head lice is often made on the basis of finding "nits". Nits are lice eggs. They appear as tiny white globules that adhere to the hair shaft. In a head of hair, they resemble dandruff, but cannot be flicked off the hair shaft as dandruff can. Nits are usually found very close to the scalp. Clusters of nits may be found in any section of hair, especially behind the ears and around the neckline.

TREATMENT

Louse shampoos must be used (FLEA SOAP DOES NOT WORK).

- Pediculicides. Examples, but not limited to: Nix, Rid, and Generic Brands. For best results, directions must be followed carefully.
- No-pesticides such as Lice Be Gone or Not Nice to Lice.

These products may be purchased over the counter at the drug store.

Anyone with allergies, pregnant women, and children under two years of age should not be treated with any medication without first consulting with their physician. Hair should be thoroughly saturated with the medicated shampoo. A half-strength vinegar rinse may help in softening the nits, so they are more easily removed (repeat treatment is recommended in 7-10 days).

All family members should be examined and, if infested, treated at the same time.

TREATMENT OF PERSONAL ARTICLES AND THE ENVIRONMENT

- Machine wash all washable clothing and bed linens that have been in contact with your child the previous week or longer if there are many nits. Bedding, clothing, and other personal items in the home should be laundered in hot, soapy water. Dryers should be used if available.
- Place non-washable personal articles of clothing or bedding in the dryer on high heat for at least 20 minutes, dry clean or seal non-washable fabrics in a plastic bag for a minimum of 10 days.
- A complete vacuuming of furniture, carpeting and car upholstery are also very important.

PREVENTION

Sharing of combs, brushes or other grooming aids belonging to other persons should be discouraged.

Individuals should not share caps, or other head gear or clothing, especially coats or sweaters.

Examine your child's hair regularly for nits.

You are encouraged to notify the parents of your child's closest friends. This is particularly important if the children have had a "sleep-over" or participated in activities involving possible body contact such as gymnastics, ballet classes, wrestling or "dress-up".

Anyone, adult or child, can get head lice. It has nothing to do with cleanliness, in fact, lice prefer a clean, healthy head to a dirty one.

Although these insects cannot hop, jump, or fly, they are easily transmitted from head to head contact or on shared objects (combs, towels, barrettes, headphones, etc), so every member of the family should be checked. The most common symptom of infestation is intense itching on the back of the head or neck. Head lice cannot survive without a human host, or on family pets. There is little evidence to support that they carry disease. If you find that a member of your family has lice or Nits (eggs), **DON'T PANIC**—just follow the steps below to take care of the problem. If you have questions about the use of the product you choose:

- 1). Ask your pharmacist
- 2). Call the school nurse at _____
- 3). Call Adams County Health Department (222-8440)
- 4). Ask your Health Care Provider

1. **CHECK EVERY MEMBER OF THE FAMILY & HOUSEHOLD.** Look for tiny white eggs behind ears and at neckline. Head lice are small, grayish-tan insects. If children spend time in another household on a regular basis, because of separation, divorce, or playing at a friends/neighbors or relatives, that household is an extension of yours and people living there need head checks, too. Please tell them that they need to check for lice.
2. **FOLLOW DIRECTIONS** on product you choose. Treat only those who are infected with head lice or eggs.

3. **REMOVE ALL EGGS** with head lice removal comb. Use the nit comb daily to remove any eggs. Continue to comb hair daily for 1 week beyond finding the last egg or louse. **COMBING OUT NITS AND LICE IS THE MOST IMPORTANT STEP.**
4. **WASH CLOTHES, PILLOWS, SHEETS, BLANKETS AND TOWELS IN HOT WATER.** Dry on the hot cycle for at least 20 minutes. Items such as stuffed animals, headphones and hats that are not washable may be dry-cleaned or sealed in a plastic bag for two weeks.
5. **SOAK COMBS, BRUSHES, BARRETTES IN HOT WATER.**
Items should soak in hot (120° F) soapy water for 30 minutes.
6. **VACUUM EVERYWHERE.** To make sure the rest of your home is louse-free, you should vacuum carpets, pillows, mattresses, upholstered furniture, even the car seats. Evidence shows that lice sprays are not effective in killing lice or nits.
7. **FOLLOW UP** per product instructions. Look at everyone's head every day until 1 week after finding the last louse or nit.
8. **NOTIFY EVERYONE** who may have been affected – including school, church, daycare, friends and family.

COMBING

Combing the nits and lice out is the most important step!

Combing Set Up and Supplies

Set up a place that will be comfortable with the brightest light possible. Natural light works best. It's going to take a lot of time and work!

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| ☐ Well-lit area | ☐ Towel | ☐ Regular brush |
| ☐ Magnifying glass | ☐ Nit Comb | ☐ Tweezers |
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| ☐ An "old" toothbrush | ☐ Kleenex or paper towel | |
| ☐ Waste basket or paper/plastic bag | | |
| ☐ Distractions, e.g., book, magazine, coloring book, | homework, radio, TV, video, etc | |

Effective Head Lice Removal Combs

Head lice removal combs vary in effectiveness. Two combs that are recommended by many health departments are:

1. The *LiceMeister® Comb*
 - Developed by the National Pediculosis Assoc. (NPA)
At 1-800-446-4672
 - To order, call 1-888-LICEMEISTER (542-3634)
 - NPA Internet site: www.headlice.com
2. The *Lice Out® Comb*
 - Developed by Wal-Med, Inc.
 - Combo pack with Lice Out Gel and comb sells for \$14.99
 - To order, call 1-800-759-7883 or fax order to 253-845-6458
 - Internet site: www.liceout.com or www.walmed.com

(Both combs have stainless steel teeth that are close together and collect the lice and nits better than other plastic and metal combs. They are also more gentle and easier to use.)

Combing: Step by Step

- Step 1** Have the individual who is being combed watch TV or a video, listen to the radio, read a book, or play a game. A distraction will make the time go faster for both of you. Sitting still will make it easier to find the lice and nits.
- Step 2** Drape a towel around the individual's shoulders.
- Step 3** Before you use the "nit comb", use a regular comb or brush to remove any tangles.
- Step 4** Use a head lice removal comb. Comb slowly and carefully taking **only** several **strands** at a time. Too much hair at once will make it impossible to get the comb next to the scalp where the eggs are laid. **BE GENTLE** – it will go a long way towards successful combing.
- Step 5** Comb the entire length of the hair starting directly next to the scalp. If this is impossible, comb for at least the first 6 inches **from** the scalp to get eggs away from where it's warm. If you only comb the first 6 inches, you will still have to completely remove all adults and nymphs and then go back later to finish removing the remaining eggs. After you have finished combing hair from the top side, comb it from the bottom side.
- Step 6** Using bobby pins or hair clips, pin back each section after you have combed through it thoroughly.
- Step 7** A magnifying glass may help you find all of the nits. You can also use your fingers or tweezers to remove the lice and eggs.
- Step 8** Keep a small wastebasket or bag next to where you are working. Wipe off what you comb out into a Kleenex or paper towel after each combing stroke and then throw it in the wastebasket or bag.
- Step 9** Change your clothes. Launder the towel that was draped over the individual and any dirty clothes.
- Step 10** After combing, vacuum up the area where you worked and wash the nit comb. Soak in hot, soapy water for 30 minutes.

RE-INFESTATION

Re-infestation can happen! When there is a re-infestation you will see lice and/or eggs after not having seen any for several days. Review the following questions:

1. Were you and everyone in your household carefully checked for head lice when the problem first began?
2. Are you and everyone in your household following up by carefully having your hair checked for head lice every day?
3. If you or anyone in your household had head lice or nits, did you use the nit removal comb every day for the next seven days after finding the last nit?
4. Has anyone in your household been exposed to head lice from another source?

Call your school nurse for answers to any of your questions.

REMEMBER:

Re-infestation is usually the result of direct head-to-head contact. You will not always find the source of the infestation.

Most manufacturers recommend waiting 7 days in between treatments. If requiring more than 2 treatments, consult your healthcare provid

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