



LICE POLICY

The problem of head lice (pediculosis) is ongoing and can be time consuming. Even though head lice are not a threat to health, they are a frustrating nuisance. Prompt treatment of student(s) with a positive diagnosis of head lice ensures minimal disruption of their educational program. The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention does not require health providers, schools or public health departments to report lice infestations because the insects do not spread diseases.

Exclusion

When a student is initially identified as having live head lice, the student is to be excluded from school at the end of the school day for treatment.

Treatment

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends starting with an over-the-counter product and moving to prescription-strength shampoos if the initial treatment does not work.

Apply head lice treatment (over the counter or prescription) specifically made for killing head lice. Follow the directions on the label as recommended by the manufacturer. After the hair has been treated, all eggs should be combed, using a special delousing comb or hand-picked from the hair.

To prevent re-infestation, it is essential to inspect the hair **daily** for one week. Continually strip any nits you may have missed by running your fingernails down the hair shaft. Although complete removal of nits is time consuming, it is necessary.

Alternative Treatment Options

Occlusive agents, essential oils, and electronic combs are among the alternative treatment for head lice, but NOT conclusively evaluated for safety and effectiveness. Occlusive agents are applied to the hair and scalp with the intent of suffocating the lice. These products have not been proven to be effective but are commonly used.

Occlusive agents include mayonnaise, tub margarine, herbal oils, olive oil, melted butter, vinegar and petroleum jelly. Treatment with petroleum jelly overnight may be effective but can leave a residue in the hair that requires many washings to remove.¹

Readmission

After treatment at home, it's mandatory to return to school the next day via the health office, for inspection. Parents must be notified that students who return to school with live lice will be sent

home. As such, parents are advised to accompany their child to school. Upon checking the head, if live lice are found, the child returns home with parent for treatment. If child has been treated and there are no live lice, the child may return to class. We encourage the removal of nits but child can return to class if they have been treated, even though nits are still present.

Recurrent Re-infestations

If a child has untreated or recurrent infestations, then the nurse and parent must work together to find the likely source of re-infestation and solve that problem by:

1. Education of parent using written materials and verbal instructions.
2. Referral to child's primary care doctor regarding pediculocide resistance.
3. Mechanical (manual) removal of all nits, although time consuming, is essential. Regularly using a delousing comb can keep infestations from reoccurring.
4. Assistance of community agencies or social service agencies, if appropriate, for assistance with infestation management.
5. Mass screening (school-wide or whole classrooms) is not an evidence-based practice in controlling head lice infestation/re-infestations. It is the responsibility of the parent to treat head lice infestation. Key to success in controlling head lice, with small chance of recurrence, is in the removal of all nits after the use of the pediculocide. Although students are allowed back to class with any reportedly treated hair when there are no live lice, encourage parents to continue removing nits until the problem is resolved. Again, regularly using a delousing comb can keep infestations from reoccurring.

For questions or more information, contact the school-site nurse.

Head Lice (Pediculosis) Resources

State of California Guidelines on Head Lice Prevention and Control for School Districts and Child Care Facilities March 2012 and other Head Lice resources:

<http://www.cdph.ca.gov/HEALTHINFO/DISCOND/Pages/HeadLice.aspx>

American Academy of Pediatrics Head Lice Policy and Clinical Report published August 2010.

<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/site/aappolicy/index.xhtml>

Do a search for "head lice 2010" to bring up the publication, click on: "PDF" right hand side.

California School Nurses Organization (CSNO) Head Lice (Pediculosis) Position Statement:

http://www.csno.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/2Pediculosis_Management1.pdf

National School Nurses Organization (NASN) Head Lice (Pediculosis) Position Statement:

<http://www.nasn.org/PolicyAdvocacy/PositionPapersandReports/NASNPositionStatementsArticleView/tabid/462/ArticleId/40/Pediculosis-Management-in-the-School-Setting-Revised-2011>