

Notes from the Nurse

There have been some recent confirmed cases of head lice the at the Nock Middle School. At the present time we believe the situation is under control. The school nurse has checked students' hair and encourages parents to keep checking. If you look closely at the scalp and see small, pearl/gray eggs firmly attached to the hair shaft your child has nits (eggs) and may also have live crawling lice, so look carefully. Nits (eggs) are found on hairs at the crown of the head, at the nape of the neck and behind the ears, but they may be laid anywhere on the scalp. Sometime dandruff and hair products look similar, so let me know so I can see for sure.

Lice do not cause disease or infection but they are a nuisance! Lice do not hop, jump or fly; they are transmitted directly from person to person (most common) or indirectly through personal objects such as hairbrushes, hats, scarves, clothing, sheets, and pillowcases. Away from people, head lice can live for only a short time; they must have a human head in order to survive and hatch eggs.

Lice and their nits can become resistant to available lice treatments if they are not used exactly according to the product label. Never divide a bottle of lice shampoo between family members and always do the second shampooing (usually 7-10 days later). ONLY treat the person with lice, never the whole family. Re-infestation may occur if even one viable nit remains on the hair shaft. After treatment, nits are removed by scraping them off the entire length of the hair. Special fine-tooth combs are available, and it is common to "nit pick" through the hair after treatment to remove the nits. **Children with head lice may return to school once they have been treated and are live lice free, but need to stop by the nurses' office for a head check.**

10 Steps to Staying Ahead of Lice

1. Watch for signs of head lice, such as frequent head-scratching.
2. Check all family members for lice and nits (lice eggs) at least once a week. It helps to use natural light and a magnifying glass.
3. Treat only those family members who have lice. Consult with your physician for a recommendation of a lice product found at your drug store, the pharmacy section of your food store.
4. Call your doctor first if you are pregnant, nursing or allergic to weeds, plants, etc. Never use a lice product on a baby or children under 2 years of age.
5. Follow package directions carefully. Use the product over the sink (not in the tub or shower.) Keep the eyes covered with a washcloth.
6. Remove all nits (which will stay on the hair after treatment.) This is essential! A special metal lice comb may be helpful.
7. Wash sheets and recently worn clothing in hot water and in a hot dryer. Combs and brushes may be soaked in hot (not boiling) water for 10 minutes.
8. Vacuuming is the safest and best way to control lice on mattresses, rugs, furniture, and stuffed animals.
9. Continue to check head often for 2-3 weeks to make sure head lice are gone. **Regular checking is the best prevention (we know it is tedious work but it is the best way to control lice).**
10. When you find a case of lice, tell others. Kindly call your child's school or daycare. Notify neighborhood parents and parents of children your child has recently been in contact with (especially sleepovers). We know that even the best of families can catch lice, and most of us who are parents have been through it at least once ourselves.

If you have any further concerns please feel free to contact me. Thank you.

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