

Dear Parent/Guardian

You are receiving this letter because head lice or recently laid nits (eggs) have been found on your child's head. Don't panic! Head lice are not considered a health risk because they do not spread disease or illness. Head lice among school children are a common frustration; however, the spread of head lice can be controlled and prevented.

To help prevent the spread of head lice, it is important to treat your child today after school. Use a lice shampoo or other method to kill live lice, such as manual removal with a lice comb. Always follow the package directions when using a lice product. To remove nits after a treatment is done, use a lice comb, combing small sections of wet hair at a time. Once a treatment has been done, your child may return to school, but check in at the school office so designated personnel can re-examine your child's hair in a private location.

Remember to check everyone in the household and treat anyone that has live head lice. If you think you see nits within one quarter inch of the scalp, but no live lice, continue to check daily. Check for live lice for two to three weeks following any treatment. A second treatment may need to be done in seven to ten days to kill any lice that may have hatched after the first treatment.

Head lice are spread by head-to-head contact. Head lice do not jump or fly. Off the human head, lice cannot move with speed or direction. They feed off blood in the scalp and survive only on a human head. Lice do not survive much longer than one to two days off a human head. This makes it difficult for them to be transmitted environmentally. Adult female lice lay their eggs (nits) close to the scalp so the new louse can eat as soon as it hatches (otherwise it dies quickly). Nits are attached with a glue-like substance, making them very difficult to remove. Combing the hair when wet with a lice comb is a good way to find evidence of lice and remove nits.

Remind your children not to have close head-to-head contact with others. Girls with long hair can wear it braided or in a ponytail to help avoid hair-to-hair contact. Please see attached instructions on treating head lice.

If you have any questions contact your primary care provider.

Sincerely,

TREATMENT OF HEAD LICE information sheet

The following is a suggested procedure you may wish to confirm with your physician or local health department prior to use.

Treatment of the Child

- Remove all your child's clothing and place the clothing in a plastic bag.
- Apply head lice treatment according to your physician's instructions or label instructions provided by the drug manufacturer. There are medicated liquids (pediculicides) available for head lice – RID, Nix, etc. These may be purchased without prescription from the drug store. There is no published evidence to indicate that one product is superior to the others.
- Have your child put on clean clothing after treatment.
- All family members and close friends of your child should be examined. Family members who have live lice or nits within ¼" of the scalp should be treated.

Decontamination of Personal Articles and Environment

Since heat is lethal to lice and their eggs, many personal articles can be cleaned by machine washing in hot water and/or drying using the hot cycle of the clothes dryer. If using the clothes dryer dry the articles for at least twenty (20) minutes at the high heat setting. Some non-washable articles may be cleaned in the clothes dryer provided that the heat will not harm them.

- Machine wash all washable clothing and bed linens that have been in contact with your child within the previous three (3) days.
- Personal articles of clothing, bedding or stuffed animals that can not be washed or dried may be dry cleaned or simply left in a plastic bag and sealed for a period of fourteen (14) days.
- Combs, brushes, and similar items can be treated by soaking them in rubbing alcohol

or Lysol for one hour or by soaking them in a pan of water heated on the stove to near boiling, (caution: heat may damage some combs and brushes).

- Vacuum all floors, rugs, pillows, carpeting and upholstered furniture.

Notification of Other Parents

Parents of your child's closest friend(s) should be notified that their child may also be affected since the children play together. This is particularly important if the children have been to sleepovers or participate in activities involving frequent body contact such as wrestling, ballet classes, football etc.

Returning to School

Your child may return to school after he/she has been treated.

Head Lice Prevention and Control Guidelines

The Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) and the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) jointly support the following statements for the management of head lice within school communities. Currently, there is no scientific evidence demonstrating that enforced exclusion policies are effective at reducing head lice transmission.

Procedures

At this time, MDCH and MDE recommend procedures that focus on active cases only.

Active cases are defined as the presence of live lice or nits found within $\frac{1}{4}$ " of the scalp.

Nits that are found beyond $\frac{1}{4}$ " of the scalp have more than likely hatched or are no longer viable.

- It is preferable that any student with an active case be sent home.

Immediate treatment at home is advised. The student will be readmitted to school after treatment.

- Any student with nits farther than $\frac{1}{4}$ " from scalp should be allowed in school.
- Parents should remove nits daily and treat if live lice are observed.

When a member of the school staff suspects a child has head lice the following procedures should be followed:

- The child should be restricted from activities involving close contact (i.e., hugging) or sharing personal items (i.e., hats, clothing, brushes) with other children.
- The school office must be notified and the parents must be contacted. The school should also provide parents with a copy of an information sheet on head lice and treatment options.
- A letter should be sent home notifying classmates' parents that a case of head lice is suspected and asking them to check their children for head lice. Please

remember that this information is confidential and the student should not be named.

- Parents are responsible for regular head checks at home. Mass school screenings are not recommended by the Michigan Department of Community Health and the Michigan Department of Education

Parents have the ultimate responsibility for their children. This includes:

- Assisting in the prevention and management of head lice cases through regular checks of their children's hair and starting immediate treatment when head lice are detected.
- If questions arise the affected student's parents should talk with a doctor about their concerns and treatment options.