



HEALTH MEMO: HEAD LICE

Name: _____ Date: _____

Dear Parent/Guardian: The following is information for you about how to treat your child's head lice.

Head lice are not a sign of poor health habits or being dirty. It is spread by sharing combs, brushes, clothing, and hats and in bedding.

Head lice can happen to anyone. We realize there is a lot to do, but with vigilance, the head lice will not reoccur.

- To control the spread of head lice, your child may not return to school until his or her head is free of lice and nits (lice eggs.) There are many lice treatment shampoos on the market as well as other mechanical and manual methods of controlling the lice. Please check with your physician, health department, pharmacist or other health provider to determine what is best for your child. With whatever method of lice control you use, follow the directions carefully.
- Bedding, clothing, and hats should be laundered in very hot water (120 degrees) on the same day or evening your child is treated.
- Nits (lice eggs) are tiny, white, pearly eggs that attach themselves to the hair shaft close to the scalp. The nit can be removed manually by pinching between two fingernails and pulling it off the hair shaft, or by using a "nit comb", available in most pharmacies.
- All members of the household need to be checked when there is one case of head lice in your immediate family.
- Stuffed animals can be bagged in plastic for 2 weeks to rid them of lice.
- Vacuum the inside of the car and the car seats. Vacuum the sofa along with the carpets in your home.
- Hair color or a hair permanent is not recommended.
- It has been found that after shampooing, combing the hair and "nits" out in the sunlight is helpful. Faithful combing of the "nits" is so important. Please continue to do so for 1-2 weeks after lice treatment shampoo.

When your child returns to school, please stop by the health office for the school nurse to "check" your child's head before they are permitted to re-enter their class.

The Facts:

- Head lice are very small wingless insects. They are usually grey or tan, but turn reddish-brown after feeding
- Head lice live in human hair and must feed on human blood; they do not live on pets.
- Head lice can crawl, but they cannot hop, jump or fly.
- Head lice live about 30 days, and a female louse may lay up to 100 nits(eggs).
- Nits are tiny oval eggs about the size of the eye of a needle that are grey, white or brown.
- Nits are laid on hair close to the scalp, and they stick tight to the shaft of the hair – dandruff, mouse, and hair spray can easily be brushed off the hair; nits cannot.

What to Do:

- Check all family members for head lice.
- Treat all family members who have head lice or nits.
- Use shampoo without conditioners right before and a week after using lice shampoo.
- Use lice shampoo as directed on bottle
- **PICK EVERY LOUSE AND NIT YOU SEE EVERY DAY!**
- **CHECK/PICK LICK AND NITS DAILY FOR 2-3 WEEKS, THEN WEEKLY**
- Clean combs, brushes, etc. in very hot, soapy water (or boil) for at least 10 mins.
- Wash all bedding/clothing worn in the past 3 days. Don't forget about coats, mittens, scarves, etc. in very hot water (120 degrees)
- Put non-washable items into plastic bags for 14 days or put into a hot dryer for 30 mins.
- Iron and vacuum mattresses
- Vacuum floors, rugs, mattresses, furniture, car seats (fronts of the couch, arm rests, etc.)
- Wipe clean vinyl or leather chair/car seat surfaces.
-

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the school nurse at 218-768-2111 ext. 232. You may also contact your family physician, Aitkin County Public Health Department (800-328-3744), or your local pharmacist for additional assistance.