

A Note from the Nurse About LICE!

Itchy, scratchy, creepy, crawly. Its unsettling to have these creatures take up residence in your family, but its important to remember a few facts about lice:

- ❑ Lice can't jump or fly from head to head.
- ❑ You can't catch lice from your pet.
- ❑ Lice don't spread disease.
- ❑ Lice like clean hair just as much as dirty hair.
- ❑ 6 – 12 million people get head lice every year.

Lice are tiny insects that live in human hair. They are about the size of a sesame seed and have light and dark areas on their bodies that help them blend into hair. Their eggs, called nits, are even smaller and attach themselves to hair strands with very strong glue. About 12 days after the nits hatch, they can lay up to 10 eggs a day till they die at about 28 days.

Lice are most frequently spread from direct head to head contact and sometimes through shared combs or hats. They won't live more than 24 hours off a human.

To check for lice, use a magnifying glass in bright light or sunlight. Inspect the hair in layers especially above the ears and the back of the neck where lice like to live. Look for lice on the scalp and the “sesame seed” nits attached to hair. Sometimes hairspray, dandruff or dirt look like lice or nits, but they can be flicked out of the hair easily. Nits are firmly attached and feel like tiny grains of sand stuck to the hair.

Pesticides to get rid of lice have serious side effects. They have not been tested for safety on children. People with cuts or sores on their scalp should not use pesticides. Pregnant or nursing mothers, children under two and people with chronic health conditions should NOT use pesticides to remove lice.

An immobilizing gel which keeps the lice from moving about on the head combined with daily combing using a metal, fine toothed comb is the safest and most effective way to remove lice. Combing and nitpicking daily for three weeks will prevent nits from hatching and re-infesting the head with lice.

Parents should periodically check their children's scalp for lice and nits and especially with excessive head scratching. If you notice lice, please notify the office and we will give you information for safely eliminating lice.

Information on lice is available from the school nurse and the following web sites:

<http://www.headlice.org/>

http://kidshealth.org/kid/ill_injure/sick/lice.html,

http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dpd/parasites/headlice/factsht_head_lice.htm

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