



Minneapolis Public Schools Health Related Services



Head Lice

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Head lice have been found in your child's classroom. Anyone can get head lice. They cause no disease or illness. The important thing is to treat it right away. Please check your child/ren for head lice. This letter tells you some important information about head lice.

Cause: A tiny insect called a louse.

Symptoms: Itching of the head. The presence of lice and/or lice eggs (nits). Lice eggs (nits) are tiny grayish/brownish colored oval eggs that are stuck to the hair whereas dandruff is loose and flaky. Lice are small brownish colored insects that move quickly in the hair. They may be difficult to see.

Spread: By direct head-to-head contact and by sharing personal items such as combs, hats, sheets, pillowcases, etc. Lice do **NOT** jump or fly; they crawl and can fall off the head. They only lay their eggs while on the head. Nits that are more than 1/2" from the scalp are dead or empty and will not hatch. Lice do not spread to or from pets.

Incubation: It takes 7 to 10 days from when the eggs are laid until they hatch.

Exclusion: Students with head lice can return to school after being treated with a lice killing product and no live lice are seen.

Treatment: Use a lice-killing product and carefully follow the package directions (especially the **amount of product to use, length of time on the hair, and whether to use on dry or damp hair**). Some products require a second treatment 7 to 10 days later to kill any lice that may have hatched after the first treatment. Use the medication over the sink, **NOT** in the tub or shower. Always keep the eyes covered. Wash bedding and recently worn clothing in hot water and dry in hot dryer. Combs and brushes may be soaked in hot (not boiling) water for ten (10) minutes or cleaned with an old toothbrush and soapy water. Avoid lice sprays. Vacuuming is the safest and best way to remove lice or fallen hairs with attached nits from furniture, rugs, stuffed animals, backpacks, and car seats. Change vacuum cleaner bag after vacuuming. Check all family members for head lice. **ONLY** treat those who have lice. Although it may be hard to do, **remove all nits** using a metal nit comb, or your fingernails to slide nits off the hair shaft. Continue checking the head and combing hair daily for 2 weeks.

Remember: Head lice are not choosy about who they infest. If you find that your child(ren) have lice, please report it to your school health office.