

## **Head Lice Information**

Head lice are a fairly common problem in children. They have nothing to do with personal hygiene, the cleanliness of our homes or with good parenting skills. Head lice don't discriminate – they like anyone and everyone! Fortunately, they don't transmit any diseases, but they are a nuisance.

Direct physical, head-to-head contact is the usual method of transmission. Lice do not jump, fly or swim. Mature lice, which are no bigger than a sesame seed, avoid light and are hard to see. Lice eggs or "nits" are usually found close to the scalp – usually within ¼ inch. They appear as tiny whitish ovals that are "glued" to the hair shaft. They cannot easily be flicked away as dandruff can. They cannot survive on pets.

Treatment for lice should NOT be given unless you actually have lice present. If you are in doubt as to any symptoms or treatment, please contact your family doctor or the school nurse. Pregnant women or nursing mothers, children 2 years of age and under, and anyone with a pre-existing medical condition such as asthma, epilepsy, or any other chronic condition should consult their doctor before beginning any treatment.

If your child should develop head lice in the future, here are a few suggestions: Comb your child's head DAILY with a lice comb for 2-3 weeks until all the nits are gone. Pesticide sprays to the home are unwarranted and may pose personal and environmental hazards. Vacuuming is the safest and best way to remove lice from upholstered furniture, rugs, mattresses, etc. Wash all bedding, clothing and toys in hot water and dry on high heat for 30 minutes.

We would appreciate it if you would call the health room or the district nurses if your child should develop head lice. We can assist you with suggestions for treatment. Please encourage your child not to share or trade personal items such as hats, combs, brushes, headbands, or barrettes. If you have any questions or concerns regarding head lice, please call the district nurses at 850-6034.

Additional information can be found on the Center for Disease Control's website at:  
<http://www.cdc.gov/lice/head/prevent.html>.

Karen Weis, RN, BSN  
Mindy Klawonn, RN, ADN  
District Nurses