

HEAD LICE

Evansdale Elementary Fact Sheet for Parents of Children with Lice

Having head lice has nothing to do with the cleanliness of your home. Head lice can be a nuisance, but they have not been shown to spread disease. Head lice are very common among elementary school children and are very easy to catch. It's common for there to be several outbreaks of lice a year at most elementary schools. From time to time, you may receive a letter from the principal if several cases of head lice pop up.

Although these insects cannot hop, jump, or fly, they are transmitted via head to head contact or the sharing of hats, combs, brushes, barrettes, etc. of an infested child. Please help us prevent head lice at Evansdale by examining your child's head on a regular basis.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR:

- Nits (also called louse eggs) are the yellowish-white eggs the size of the head of a pin or sesame seed.
- Some lice do not cause an itch, so you have to look carefully to find them.
- Head lice are found on the hair itself and move to the scalp to feed.
- They have six legs which end in a claw and they rarely fall from the head.
- Nits are laid within 1.5 cm of the scalp and are firmly attached to the hair.
- They resemble dandruff, but can't be brushed off.
- Nits are often found behind the ear and along the child's hair line on the back of the neck.



WHAT TO DO:

A lice infestation should not be a source of embarrassment to either parent or child since lice can infest anyone. The important thing is to treat your child promptly and correctly.

- Purchase a high quality lice-killing shampoo at your local retailer. No prescription is needed; however, persistent cases may require a prescription shampoo from your doctor.
- Shampoo your child's head following label directions on the package. Keep shampoo out of the child's eyes.
- After shampooing, comb child's hair with a fine-tooth comb (usually in package) to remove all nits. Metal combs work better; these are available for purchase at pharmacies.
- Inspect child's hair for nits daily for one week and regularly thereafter. Repeat shampoo treatment according to package directions.
- Wash clothing and bedding your child wore or used during the 2 days before treatment using the hot water (130°F) laundry cycle and the high heat drying cycle. Clothing and items that are not washable can be dry-cleaned or sealed in a plastic bag and stored for 2 weeks.
- Vacuum furniture, car and carpets where your child sat or lay...even their back pack, stuffed animals, etc.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention point out that the risk of getting infested by a louse that has fallen onto a rug or carpet or furniture is very small. Head lice survive less than 1-2 days if they fall off a person and cannot feed; nits cannot hatch and usually die within a week if they are not kept at the same temperature as that found close to the human scalp. Spending much time and money on housecleaning activities is not necessary to avoid re-infestation by lice or nits that may have fallen off the head or crawled onto furniture or clothing.

- Instruct child not to wear playmates' clothes, hats or other garments and not to use someone else's comb or hairbrush.
- Notify your child's teacher.
- As a matter of courtesy, please inform the parents of your child's friends so that they can check the heads of their children.

WHEN TO GO BACK TO SCHOOL:

After treatment is complete and the child is completely free of nits. All children returning to school after being treated for head lice must be accompanied by the family and checked by school personnel for clearance to return to class. Do not send student on the bus until child has been cleared to return to class.