

## Lice Information for Parents

Lice are tan to grayish-white. They cannot fly or hop but they can crawl quickly. Nits are lice eggs. They are glued to the hair strand about ½ inch from the scalp. This glue is so strong that the nits cannot be as easily removed as dandruff or other hair debris.

People get lice from head to head contact and from sharing the following items:

- Personal items (clothing, combs, hats, scarves)
- Towels, bed linens, carpeting, pillows, blankets
- Stuffed toys, dolls and doll clothing
- Foam earphones
- Piling clothes or coats together
- School uniforms, costumes or gym clothing

The symptoms of lice are:

- Persistent scratching especially at the back of the neck or behind the ears
- A tickling feeling of something moving in the hair
- Presence of nits

Suggestions for prevention are:

- Check child's hair daily for presence of lice or nits
- Keep long hair braided or pulled back
- Discourage sharing of personal items
- Apply small amount of gel or hairspray prior to leaving for school
- Instruct child against reclining on couches, cloth chairs or area rugs away from home

## Treatment for your Child and Family:

1. Obtain a product for the treatment of head lice. These can be obtained from the health department, your pediatrician or over the counter at a local drug store. Some examples are: RID, NIX, and Wal-Mart Equate Lice Treatment.
2. Carefully follow the directions on the product box for application of the shampoo. Please note any contraindications or side effects listed in package insert. Concerns should be addressed with your Primary Care Provider.
3. Remember, these products do not kill the nits/eggs. You must manually comb or pick out the nits. All nits must be removed from the hair.
4. To comb out nits, separate out a small section of hair. Insert the comb close to the scalp and gently pull through hair. Re-comb that section and then pin combed hair flat to the head. Continue until all hair is combed through. Dip comb into soapy water and use a tissue to remove lice debris. Make sure the comb is clean each time you use it. Metal combs work best to remove nits.
5. To remove nits with your fingers, run your fingers down the hair shaft until you feel the nit. Grasp the nit between your fingernails and slide it off the hair. Place in a plastic bag and discard.
6. Hair should be inspected and nits removed daily for the next 2 weeks after finding the head lice. You must get rid of the nits in order to stop the continued hatching of the eggs.
7. Re-treat your child after 7-10 days of the first treatment if any nits or live bugs continue to be noted.

## Treatment for Your Home:

1. Wash all clothes, bed linens and towels in hot water and dry in a dryer for 20 minutes. Items that cannot be washed such as stuffed animals and coats should be placed in plastic sealed bags for 2 weeks.
2. Vacuum all carpet, rugs, mattresses, pillows, furniture, draperies, and car upholstery including car seats. Empty vacuum canister and throw away vacuum bag.
3. All flooring, countertops and other surfaces should be cleaned with hot soapy water.
4. Disinfect brushes, combs, sports helmets, hats and other objects that have come in contact with child's head. This can be done by soaking in hot soapy water or lice shampoo.
5. No treatment is necessary for your pet. Pets do not typically get lice.
6. Over the counter sprays are not very effective. Thorough cleaning should rid your home of lice.
7. Remember to check everyone in the family and treat if live bugs or nits are found. All nits must be combed or manually removed in order to stop the hatching of the eggs. Otherwise your child and family will continue to have lice.