

Head Lice Information

Information taken from the Hingham Public Schools

Updated November 2011

Each year approximately 6 to 12 million children between the ages of 3 and 12 years of age are infested with head lice. While the odds of your son or daughter developing head lice are relatively small, the following may be useful information to help spot and treat this condition. (National Association of School Nurses, NASN)

Head lice are spread through direct, person-to-person contact, or, less commonly, through contact with an infested person's personal items. Head lice are commonly spread within households. Children often spread head lice to each other during close contact while playing. Head lice crawl from person to person. They do not jump or fly and pets cannot spread head lice. An infested person can continue to spread head lice to other people until he/she has successfully completed a course of treatment that kills all of the head lice and their eggs. (Massachusetts Department of Public Health, DPH)

If your child does have head lice, please call your health care provider or pharmacist to receive the recommended appropriate treatment. They may recommend over-the-counter, prescription, natural or herbal products. The School Nurses will not endorse a specific treatment or product.

NASN does not recommend that school nurses continue the practice of checking for head lice on all students classroom wide. This will help maintain student privacy, the family's right to confidentiality, prevent stigmatization and it won't disrupt the educational process. According to NASN, by the time a child with an active lice infestation has been identified, he or she may have had the infestation for one month or more. Therefore, it poses little additional risk of transmission to others.

The School Nurses will check students that have symptoms of head lice or students that have had close contact with active head lice. We will no longer perform classroom wide head checks following NASN & Mass. DPH recommendations. Head checks need to be done at home on a regular basis.

Your child may return to school after you have completed the physician recommended treatment and every effort has been made to remove nits from your child's hair. Your child must be checked upon his/her return to school by the school nurse before returning to the classroom.

Here are some suggested web-sites for further lice information:

<http://www.cdc.gov/lice>

www.cdc.gov/parasites/lice

<http://www.mass.gov/Eeohhs2/docs/dph/cdc/factsheet>

<http://www.nasn.org/ToolsResources/ScratchHeadLiceResources.aspx>

Guidelines – Head Lice

1. Children will be sent home from school for treatment if a case of pediculosis infestation has been found. An active infestation is determined if the school nurse identifies live lice and/or many nits within one-quarter inch of the child's scalp. (CDC)
2. Efforts will be made by the school nurse to check other students in the school known to be in close contact with the infested student. Classroom-wide student head checks will no longer take place. (NASN)
3. After being treated at home, students must be checked by the school nurse before returning to class. The nurse will make a determination as to whether the child will be allowed to remain in school.
4. Parents will be encouraged to check their child's head periodically throughout the school year.
5. Informational fact sheet are available on the websites listed above.
6. If several cases of head lice are seen in the school or a specific class, parents will be notified by e-mail.

Guidelines were taken from the following resources:

www.cdc.gov/parasites/lice

<http://www.mass.gov/Eeohhs2/docs/dph/cdc/factsheet>

<http://www.nasn.org/ToolsResources/ScratchHeadLiceResources.aspx>

<http://www.cdcgov/lice>