

Head Lice Policy



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Head lice, although not an illness or disease, is very common among children and is spread very easily through head-to-head contact during play, sports, or nap time, and when children share things like brushes, combs, hats, scarves and headphones. If a student is found to have nits, they may remain in school and a notice will be sent home with the student for parent to treat and remove the nits. If careful observation indicates that a student has head lice, the school nurse will contact the parent to pick student up from school to go home for proper treatment. Instructions for proper treatment with a FDA-approved medicated shampoo or cream rinse that may be purchased at any drug or grocery store will be offered to the parent or guardian. After shampooing, all lice and nits must be removed. The student will be expected to return to school within 24 hours of going home for treatment. A parent or guardian must accompany student to the nurse's office to be approved for readmission to school. If the nurse finds that all lice and nits have been removed, the student will be re-admitted to school. If the treatment is unsatisfactory and any live lice are seen the student will not be re-admitted to school until no evidence of live lice is found. Notice will also be provided to parents of elementary school students in the affected classroom. More information on head lice can be obtained from DHS website Managing Head Lice. <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/schoolhealth/lice.shtm>

Head Lice Prevention



Head lice are spread most commonly by direct head-to-head (hair-to-hair) contact. However, much less frequently they are spread by sharing clothing or belongings onto which lice have crawled or nits attached to shed hairs may have fallen. The risk of getting infested by a louse that has fallen onto a 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 scalp.

The following are steps that can be taken to help prevent and control the spread of head lice:

- Avoid head-to-head (hair-to-hair) contact during play and other activities at home, school, and elsewhere (sports activities, playground, slumber parties, camp).
- Do not share clothing such as hats, scarves, coats, sports uniforms, hair ribbons, or barrettes.
- Do not share combs, brushes, or towels. Disinfest combs and brushes used by an infested person by soaking them in hot water (at least 130°F) for 5–10 minutes.
- Do not lie on beds, couches, pillows, carpets, or stuffed animals that have recently been in contact with an infested person.
- Machine wash and dry clothing, bed linens, and other items that an infested person 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 the floor and furniture, particularly where the infested person sat or lay. However, 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.
- Do not use fumigant sprays or fogs; they are not necessary to control head lice and can be toxic if inhaled or absorbed through the skin.
- Tea tree oil, in a leave - in conditioning oil spray applied to hair and combed through every morning, lice prefer clean hair and do not like the smell of the tea tree or the oil in the hair. It is not necessary to saturate the hair, 3 – 6 sprays and combed through should be efficient.

To help control a head lice outbreak in a community, school, or camp, children can be taught to avoid activities that may spread head lice.

