

## Health Office Tips

### Heading off Head Lice

It is that time of year again that school staff often discover students with head lice. Head lice arrive year-round, but the number of cases peaks as kids return to school and then again in January. In an effort to reduce a disruption of the educational process for your child(ren), we want to send out information about head lice before it happens. As you know head lice are insects that can be found on people's heads and survive by feeding on human blood. It is important to note that head lice infestations among students require treatment but do not pose a risk of transmitting disease. Lice can come from almost anywhere including a classmate, an upholstered seat in a movie theater, or another child's jacket or sweater however we know that lice infestations (*Pediculosis* and *Pthiriasis*) are spread most commonly by close person-to-person contact. Dogs, cats, and other pets do not play a role in the transmission of human lice. Lice move by crawling. They cannot hop or fly, and usually appear white gray, red, or brown in color. Both over-the-counter and prescription medications are available for treatment of lice infestations. The female louse lays eggs (also called nits), which most often are glued to the hair shaft near the scalp hatch after 10 days therefore frequent checking is critical. A fine tooth comb may be helpful in removing a louse egg since they are usually not easily removed by simple pulling. If you find lice please treat them and notify the school Health office or your child's teacher as soon as feasible to do so. Staff will always maintain the privacy of students identified.

Please know that it remains our school practice that if a student is found with active, adult head lice, or nits, you will be contacted to pick up your child from school. All students known to have lice will be checked upon return to school the next day and allowed to remain on campus and in their class only if no active head lice or nits are detected. It is critical that you treat head lice and check family members without delay.

A treatment guide provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is included on the District Website for your easy reference should this happen. Please remember that head lice are a nuisance however with immediate treatment can be handled expeditiously. The following website is also an excellent resource: <http://www.cdc.gov/parasites/lice/head/treatment.html>

#### *Parent Tips:*

*Remind children to avoid head to head contact during play and other activities at home, school and elsewhere (sports activities, playground, slumber parties and camps)*

*Remind children to not share clothing and supplies, such as hats, helmets, sports uniforms, towels, combs, brushes, hair ties, and headphones*

*Disinfect combs and brushes used by a person with head lice by soaking them in hot water*

*Do not lie on beds, couches, pillows, carpets or stuffed animals that have recently been in contact with a person with head lice.*