



Ada City Schools Health Services

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Date: _____

Dear Parent and/or Guardian,

In a screening examination, your child was found to have head lice. Head lice are small insects that live and breed on the hairy surface of the scalp. Lice are quite small and are neutral in color, making them difficult to see, though the eggs, or nits, are much easier to spot. They appear as small specks on the individual hair shaft, usually close to the scalp.

Head lice do not carry any disease, nor does their presence mean that your student is unclean. Children often get lice because they are frequently in head-to-head contact with other children. They are spread by direct contact with the hair of an infested person. Spread of head lice by contact with clothing (such as hats, scarves, coats) or other personal items (combs, brushes, or towels) used by an infested person is uncommon. However, to prevent further potential spread, the lice must be treated at once.

Lice treatment shampoos (pediculicide) or creme rinses can be purchased with or without a prescription. It is important that you speak with your physician or pharmacist if you have questions concerning the treatment.

The most important step towards successful treatment of head lice consists of treatment with an effective pediculicide and REMOVAL OF ALL NITS.

It is not necessary to miss school because of head lice unless your student is experiencing side effects that are impeding their ability to focus and learn in class. Your student will be re-examined over the next few days/weeks to ensure successful remediation.

Thank you for your cooperation,

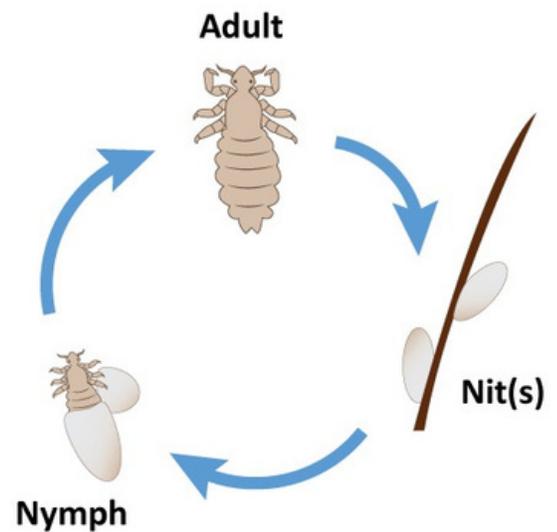
Ada City Schools Representative

Got Lice? Here's What You Need to Know About Head Lice

Head lice are small insects that live in people's hair and feed on their blood. Head lice are common among school-aged children, but anyone can get head lice. Head lice do not spread disease and having head lice is not a sign of poor hygiene or being "dirty".

Head lice have three different life stages:

1. **Nits** – tiny, oval eggs that are glued to hair. Nits are yellow or white, and nymphs hatch from them within 8-9 days.
2. **Nymphs** – immature lice that become full-grown in 9-12 days and must feed on a person's blood to live. Nymphs look like adult lice but are smaller (the size of a pinhead).
3. **Adult lice** – full-grown lice about the size of a sesame seed that are tan or grayish-white. Adult head lice must feed on blood and will die within 1-2 days if removed from a person's head.



How do people get head lice?

- People get head lice from head-to-head contact with a person who has head lice. Head lice contact occurs most often during family gatherings, play dates, sleepovers, camps, or even when taking selfies.
- Though less common, head lice may also spread by sharing combs, hats, clothing, hair ties or clips, scarves, or other personal items that come in contact with a person's head.
- Head lice are more likely to spread among children at home, daycare, or at a friend's house than at school.
- Head lice glue nits on the hair shaft. Nits found closer to the head (less than ¼ inch from the scalp) usually contain lice that will eventually hatch. Nits located further from the scalp are usually empty or are dead.

How do I know if my child or I have head lice?

- If you or your child have head lice, you may see nits stuck to the hair near the scalp and lice crawling through the hair. Nits should not be confused with dirt or dandruff in the hair, which can be easily brushed away.
- A person with head lice may have a tickling feeling in their hair or an itchy scalp. Intense scratching may also occur.
- Children may be irritable and have difficulty sleeping since head lice are most active at night.

Where are head lice found?

- Head lice are usually found on a person's scalp, especially behind the ears and near the neckline.

The best way to prevent head lice is to not touch heads with someone who has head lice. You may not be able to tell if someone has head lice or not, so it's best not to share personal items that could spread head lice from one person to another, such as hats, scarves, sweaters, headphones, or towels.

Head lice and nits have been found in my hair or my child's hair. Now what?

- Check the hair of everyone in your household to see if they have head lice.
- Over-the-counter products and medications prescribed by a doctor are available to treat head lice. **Not all products kill nits, and retreatment is often needed 7-10 days after the first treatment, when nits hatch and more head lice are found.**

- Follow the label directions carefully.
- Only treat people who have head lice. Do not leave the product on for a longer time than recommended – it will not kill lice faster.
- Each person with head lice needs a complete treatment. Do not split a single box of shampoo between people.
- Everyone in the home with head lice needs to be treated the same day.

- **Important:** Comb the hair in-between treatments to remove nits. Use a metal (not plastic) nit comb that has long teeth – several brands are available at your local pharmacy.



- Hair should be combed every 2-3 days for two weeks or until nits are no longer found. The goal is to remove any nits that can hatch new lice.
- It is easier to comb wet hair that has been parted into small sections. Each section of hair should be combed from root to tip. If lice or nits are found, wipe or rinse the comb before using it again.



Treatment doesn't seem to be working. What's wrong?

- The problem is not head lice (nits may look like dandruff or drops of hair styling product).
- The label directions for treatment were not followed properly.
- Lice may be resistant to some available lice treatment products.
- You might have gotten head lice again.

Remember: It takes 8-12 hours for some products to kill head lice. If lice are still active after this time, the product may not be working. Do not retreat until speaking with a healthcare provider.

Are there other treatment options for head lice? Do I need to treat my home for lice?

- Devices that blow heated air at high flow towards the scalp and hair have been shown to kill both nits and lice. Treatment requires at least 30 minutes and specialized training for use.
- There is no proof that vinegar, mayonnaise, olive oil, tea tree oil, or products that say they dissolve the glue on the nits “to ease their removal” actually work.
- Fumigation of the home is not necessary. To get rid of lice in the home:
 - Wash clothing, bedding, and other items used by the person with head lice in the 2 days before treatment in hot water (>130°F), then dry on the hottest heat cycle.
 - Place combs, brushes, hair bands, and hair clips in hot water (>130°F) for 5-10 minutes.
 - Vacuum carpets and furniture in areas where the person sat or laid down.



A How-To Guide for Nit Combing

Headlice are common in school-aged children, residents of congregate living settings, and people who have close, head-to-head contact with others. If head lice are found in a person's hair, it has nothing to do with how clean the person is or the environment they live in.

This guide will help explain the steps of nit combing, which is the process of using a specialized comb to remove "nits" (lice eggs) from a person's hair.



Why is nit combing important?

Nit combing helps remove nits that are in the hair of someone who has head lice. There are several treatment products available that are designed to kill head lice, but not all treatment products kill nits. If nits are not treated or properly removed from the hair, new lice can hatch, lay more eggs, and the problem will continue. Proper nit combing takes time, but it is necessary to treat and stop a head lice infestation.

Before you start...

- **Check the hair of all household members and/or close contacts** using a bright light and magnifying glass (if needed). If lice are found, it is important to treat all infested individuals at the same time whenever possible.
- **Make sure you have the right kind of nit comb.** Nit combs are usually included with the purchase of over-the-counter head lice treatment products. Nit combs should be metal (not plastic) and have long teeth that are very close together. The narrow spacing between the teeth allows for small lice and nits that are stuck to the hair to be removed while combing. Metal flea combs, available at most pet stores, can also be used.
- **Nit combing takes time – but it's a very important step!** Depending on how thick or long a person's hair is, nit combing can take an hour or more because all parts of the hair should be combed completely.



Nits are usually glued to the hair and can be difficult to remove with a nit comb, so some parts of the hair will need to be combed multiple times. Nits can also be removed by using a fingernail to pick off the nit from the hair, or by using a pair of scissors to cut the individual hair strand below where the nit is attached.

Things you need before getting started:

- Finely-toothed, metal nit comb
- Bright light source
- Magnifying glass (if available)
- Regular comb or hairbrush
- Spray bottle with water
- White towel or sheet
- Bowl of soapy water
- Paper towels or facial tissues
- Clips or hair bands

**If dealing with a head lice infestation in a child, it may be helpful to provide the child with an activity or video to keep them entertained.

How to Comb for Nits

1. Work in an area with a bright light so you can easily see through the person's hair. Cover the shoulders and back of the person with a white towel or sheet to make it easier to find any lice that may fall off while combing.
2. Wet the hair and comb through with a regular comb or brush to remove any tangles (it is easier to comb wet hair).
3. Separate the hair into small sections, about the width of the nit comb. Use the nit comb to comb each section of hair, starting at the scalp and moving to the tip of the hair. Comb each section several times from root to tip before moving on to a different section of hair.



- Head lice lay nits within $\frac{1}{4}$ inch of the scalp (about the thickness of a pencil), so it's important to get as close to the scalp as possible when combing. Nits that are found further away from the scalp are most likely already hatched or are dead.
 - If nits or lice are found while combing, remove them from the comb by rinsing the comb in a bowl of soapy water and wiping the comb dry with a paper towel or facial tissue before using again.
 - For people with short hair, sectioning the hair may not be possible. If that is the case, comb all the hair to the right, then to the left, and then from back to front. This should be repeated several times.
4. After a section of hair has been combed, use a clip or hair band to clip or tie the hair back. Then move on to the next section. Use a spray bottle to keep the hair damp or wet while you comb.



5. Once the hair has been combed through using the nit comb, sanitize or clean the clips and nit comb by soaking them in hot water ($>130^{\circ}\text{F}$) for 5–10 minutes. The towel, sheet, or any other pieces of clothing used during nit combing should be washed in hot water and then placed in a clothes dryer on the hot cycle.

Remember: Carefully inspect and comb the infested person's hair **every other day for 2 weeks**. This will help you find and remove any nits that you may have missed, or any new eggs that have been laid since you last combed the hair.

Actual Size:

Nits on Hair

Lice

