

Ingram ISD Head Lice Policy

Head Lice

Head lice, although not an illness or a 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, and headphones. If careful observation indicates that a student has head lice, the school nurse will contact the student's parent or guardian to determine whether the child will need to be picked up from school and to discuss a plan for treatment with an FDA-approved medicated shampoo or cream rinse that may be purchased from any drug or grocery store. After the student has undergone one treatment, the parent should check in with the school nurse to discuss the treatment used. The nurse can also offer additional recommendations, including subsequent treatments and how best to get rid of lice and prevent their return. More information on head lice can be obtained from the TDSHS website at <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/schoolhealth/lice.shtm>.

Screening

Active head lice infestation may create a difficult learning environment for the affected student(s); therefore, the district maintains a program to identify and eliminate head lice. Children shall be screened by the school nurse with consideration for privacy and confidentiality. Mass screenings are disruptive and initiate unnecessary use of lice medication that can cause resistance, so IISD will not conduct mass screenings. When a student is suspected of having head lice or the teacher notices excessive head scratching, the school nurse shall inspect the child. When live lice are found, the school nurse shall check the student's siblings and all known household contacts on the same campus. A parent can call and request that their child be checked, but they cannot request that another child be checked. It will be determined by the school nurse and campus administrator if a classroom check will be performed upon a parent request. **DO NOT DISCUSS A STUDENT'S LICE ISSUE WITH ANYONE OTHER THAN A PARENT OR GUARDIAN.**

Notification

Mass screenings will not be performed on any campus. Exclusion children identified with live lice shall be sent home or excluded from the classroom until treatment is completed by the parents or guardians. The school nurse shall provide instruction to the parent and/or guardian regarding identification of active infestation, treatment procedures, and readmission guidelines.

Treatment

It is recommended that the parent contact their child's physician for treatment options and prescribed medication directions be strictly followed. If they do not have a regular physician, then it is recommended that a FDA approved, over-the-counter lice product be used---again strictly following package directions. It is also important that a lice comb is used to remove the nits and dead lice. Ten days after treatment, the school nurse will perform another head check to determine if there are any active head lice. If so, we must follow the procedure for active head lice. Retreatment is recommended in 7-10 days.

Readmission

Children who are sent home for head lice infestation must be free of live lice before the student may return to school. When a student returns to school (presumably on the next day), the student shall be re-examined. The school nurse will provide the teacher and front office personnel with a release to return to the class. However, if live lice are found, the student will be sent home again and the principal will be notified. The previous procedure will be followed until the student is free of live lice.

Surprising Things You Might Not Know About Head Lice

- Head lice are not a sign of uncleanliness; they love clean hair because it is easier to latch on.
- Lice DO NOT hop, jump, or fly; the only way they can get from one person to another is direct touching, head-to-head.
- Lice are not passed on by pets. The only place head lice can survive and thrive is on the human head.
- Because of use and overuse of head lice shampoos, head lice have become resistant to the products that once would kill them, so no head lice product is 100% effective, even if you follow the direction to the letter. That is why combing and nit removal is important.
- Removing the nits (eggs) and live lice with a special metal-tooth comb is time consuming but the most effective way to get rid of them. They do not wash out.
- Schools are not the most common places where head lice are spread. Sleep-overs among friends and relatives are thought to be a common way they are passed home to home.
- School wide head checks are not recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics or the Centers for Disease Control. The most effective screening occurs when parents check their own children at home, treat if any are found, and make efforts to remove the nits.
- One of the biggest challenges in eliminating head lice is parents' discomfort in communicating about the problem with other parents when they find head lice, so they are more easily passed back and forth among close friends and relatives.
- A louse on a hat or coat is a dying louse that will not be capable of reproducing.

Healthy ones stay close to the scalp until they sense another human head. They cannot survive without blood. That is why they bite.

Please check your child for lice/nits on a regular basis. "Checking" means visually observing the hair and combing it with a metal nit comb. Nits look like flakes of dandruff or droplets of hair spray. The difference is that dandruff or hair spray will come off easily when the hair shaft is shaken, whereas nits are very difficult to remove. If you see lice or nits on your child's hair, call your health care provider for advice of treatment. Most children should not need to miss any school because of lice.

This note is a reminder to be vigilant in checking your child's head. More information on head lice can be obtained from the TDSHS website at:
<http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/schoolhealth/lice.shtm>