



TREATMENT RECOMMENDATIONS OF LICE (PEDICULOSIS)

Head lice are spread mostly by direct head-to-head contact. The sharing of hats, combs, and other hair accessories may also spread head lice. Head lice have nothing to do with cleanliness or parenting skills.

It is important to treat your student before he/she returns to school. The following treatments are recommended. Please begin treatment as soon as possible and send your student back to school so that he/she does not miss learning opportunities in the classroom.

How to manually remove head lice and nits:

- Use a fine-toothed louse or nit comb. These combs may be included with the box of chemical treatment. Combs with metal teeth spaced close together seem to work best.
- Hair should be cleaned and well-combed or brushed to remove tangles before using a louse comb. Clean the louse comb frequently to remove any caught lice or eggs. Some parents report that water, vegetable oils or hair conditioners help lubricate the hair and ease combing; others report that these make it more difficult to see the eggs.
- Sit behind your student and use a bright light to inspect and comb through the hair, one small section at a time.
- Repeat combing until no more active lice are observed.
- Comb daily until no live lice are discovered for two weeks.
- Adult female lice cement eggs to the base of a hair shaft near the skin. As the hair grows, eggs are moved away from the scalp. Eggs more than ¼ inch from the scalp are nearly always hatched and do not mean live lice are present.
- Combs, brushes, hats, and other hair accessories in contact with a person with lice should be washed in hot water each day to dislodge any lice or nits.

Over-the-counter hair treatments:

- Head lice may be treated with shampoos specifically labeled for head lice. It is very important to read and follow the label directions carefully and specifically. Parents should use caution when dealing with any insecticide, particularly on children.
- If the package directions indicate, apply a second treatment 7-10 days later to kill lice that hatch after the initial treatment.
- Pediculicides do not remove the eggs from the hair.
- You should not treat anyone who does not have live lice (or nits close to the head). Do not use these products as a prevention method to avoid lice.
- Combing can help further reduce the number of live lice and nits on the hair.

Do not apply any insecticide or other chemical not specifically labeled for treating head lice on people. Well-intentioned parents have treated their students with toxic or flammable substances that have resulted in death and poisoning.

Alternative treatment:

- Other products such as essential oils, food oil, salts, enzymes, mayonnaise, etc., have not been studied sufficiently to determine their effectiveness.
- Hand-held hair dryers may kill lice and their eggs. This method is not recommended because it is easy to burn the hair and the scalp.

Treatment of clothes:

- A clothes dryer set at high heat or a hot pressing iron will kill lice or their eggs on pillowcases, sheets, nightclothes, towels, and similar items your student has been in contact with during the previous two days. (Lice and their eggs do not live more than one to two days off the head).

Freezing:

- Lice and their eggs on objects (such as toys) may be killed by freezing temperatures. Objects that cannot be put in a clothes dryer can be placed in a freezer (or outdoors if sufficiently cold) for several days. This treatment is rarely required.

Haircuts: Short hair is more easily searched for lice and eggs, but does not prevent your student from getting head lice.

Cleaning house or car:

- Lice off the head usually die within a day and the eggs generally cannot live much longer. Vacuuming the house is recommended, however, a major cleaning effort will do little to eliminate head lice.
- Insecticide treatments for home, in vehicles, or on carpets and furniture are not needed and unnecessarily expose family members to the insecticides.

If you have any questions regarding the treatment of head lice, please call the District Nurse at (541) 475-7265 option 6. Information about head lice can also be obtained from:

- Jefferson County Public Health Department - (541) 475-4456
- Warm Springs Health and Wellness Center - (541) 553-5003
- Warm Springs Family Resource Center – (541) 615-0036