

## Students

Pediculosis (Head Lice) Treatment

## 1. The Director of Health Services

In collaboration with the Racine Unified School District school nurses and the District medical advisor will ensure that the head lice prevention and treatment program/policies/protocols are in place and reviewed periodically.

In collaboration with the Racine Unified School District administrators, assist school nurses to identify and assign responsible individuals to assist in providing guidance for the head lice prevention and treatment program.

In collaboration with principals will request that confidential space be made available for implementing the head lice prevention and treatment program in each occupied school building in the District.

Understand and support that research data does not support immediate exclusion upon the identification of the presence of live lice or nits as an effective means of controlling head lice transmission.

Understand and support that mass screenings such as checking all classmates do not have any scientific basis for being done and are not a good use of the school nurse's time.

## 2. The Medical Advisor

Provide the Racine Unified School District staff and parents with information on head lice infestations and treatments.

Take an active role as information resource for families, schools, and community agencies.

## 3. The School Nurse

Check the student's head for lice if he/she is demonstrating symptoms being sure to provide the student with privacy.

Train school personnel:

- a. On how to check a student's head if he/she is demonstrating symptoms of head lice such as frequent scratching or complaining of itching.

## Students

- b. The importance and difficulty of correctly diagnosing an active head lice infestation.
- c. On appropriate treatment options.

Educate school staff regarding causes of head lice, treatment, and common misconceptions while providing factual information such as:

- a. Getting head lice is not related to cleanliness of the person or his/her environment.
- b. Head lice are mainly spread by direct contact with the hair of an infested person.
- c. Head lice are not known to transmit disease.
- d. Head lice move by crawling, not hopping, jumping or flying.
- e. Head lice are not reportable to the public health departments.

Educate students and their families about how to prevent lice and what to do if a family member has head lice.

Collaborate with the public health departments or other resources in planning assistance to families who have chronic infestation.

## 4. Parents

Examine child's head, especially behind the ears and at the nape of the neck for live lice and nits.

All household members should be examined if lice or nits are found on a family member. Only those with evidence of an infestation should be treated.

Head lice treatment must be followed exactly as instructed on the package.

Removal of all nits after successful treatment with a pediculicide is not necessary. Nits that are attached more than  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch from the base of the hair shaft are almost always non-viable.

Soak all combs and brushes in very hot water for about 1 hour.

Wash sheets, blankets, bedding in hot water.

Seal stuffed animals or other cloth toys in a plastic bag for 1 week or, if possible, wash in hot water.

Vacuum carpets, furniture and mattresses thoroughly.

## Students

If necessary, retreat hair according to package directions for commercial products or follow the treatment protocol.

### 5. Head Lice Treatment Protocol

Students identified with live head lice do not need to be sent home early from school. They can go home at the end of the day, be treated, and return to school following appropriate treatment.<sup>2</sup>

Students identified with head lice should be discouraged from close direct contact with others. They should not be removed from the classroom.<sup>2</sup>

The child's parent or guardian should be notified that day by telephone and by having a note sent home with the child at the end of the day stating that prompt, proper treatment of this condition is in the best interest of the child and his or her classmates.

There are many acceptable treatment options. Treatment with a product that is both a pediculicide and an ovicide is the surest way to kill lice and prevent further reinfestation.<sup>1</sup>

The student may return to school immediately following treatment, but must be checked by trained school staff before returning to class.

Students with nits-only should not be sent home from school. They should be monitored for signs of re-infestation.<sup>1,3</sup>

While head lice are rarely spread at school, elementary schools will send a letter home to the parents of the children in the affected child's classroom where live lice were found recommending that the parents check their children for evidence of head lice.

### 6. Tips for Treating Head Lice at Home

#### Treating Hair

- a. Apply lice killing hair shampoo to the child's hair. These products are available over-the-counter (without a prescription) at drugstores, grocery stores, and some medical clinics.

## Students

- b. Follow the manufacturer's or health care provider's instructions for use with all head lice products. Different products have different instructions.
    - 1) Do not use a cream rinse or combination shampoo/cream rinse before or 2-3 days after treatments.
    - 2) Using more of the treatment product, reapplying it sooner than recommended, or keeping it in the hair longer than directed will not make it work better or faster. This will only increase the risk of toxic side effects.
    - 3) Do not use a hair dryer as some hair treatment products are flammable.
    - 4) Never use more than one hair treatment product at the same time.
  - c. Do not use products that are meant to be used for animals. They are dangerous to people and can harm the child.
  - d. If live crawling lice are found 24-48 hours after treatment, contact your child's health care provider to talk about further options. This may indicate a resistance to the product.
  - e. Most over-the-counter products recommend a second treatment 7-10 days after the first. This step is very important. A second treatment will kill any lice that may have hatched after the first treatment.
7. Nit (lice eggs) Removal Tips
- a. Check for lice/nits under good lighting. Natural sunlight is the best.
  - b. Concentrate on those nits found close to the scalp. Nits are oval-shaped, usually greyish white, although the color can vary. Nits that are  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch or more from the scalp are either dead or have already hatched.
  - c. Divide the hair into sections and pin back. Work on one section at a time.
  - d. Using a nit removal comb and/or your fingernails, go through each section from the scalp to the end of the hair removing the nits. Nits are cemented to the hair and are difficult to remove.
  - e. Frequently dip the comb into a cup of water or use a paper towel to remove any lice, nits, or debris from the comb.
  - f. After the nit removal is complete, look one more time for live lice. Lice move quickly. They can be caught with tweezers, your fingernails, or "stick them" with scotch tape.

## Students

## 8. Tips for Cleaning the Environment

Head lice only live 24-48 hours off a human being. You don't have to spend a lot of time or money on household cleaning activities. There are special preparations for cleaning available at stores but they are expensive and not more effective than the suggestions below.

- a. Machine wash and dry clothing, bed linens and other items worn or used in the previous 24-48 hours by the person with head lice. Use the hot water (130°F) laundry cycle and the high heat drying cycle.
- b. Clothing or items that are not washable can be dry cleaned or sealed in a plastic bag and stored for 2 weeks. After 2 weeks open the sealed bag out doors and shake the items thoroughly before bringing them in the house.
- c. Soak combs and brushes in hot water (at least 130°F) or a disinfectant like Lysol® for 5-10 minutes after use.
- d. Vacuum the floor and furniture where the infested person sat within the last 24-48 hours.
- e. Do not use sprays. They can be toxic if inhaled or absorbed through the skin.

## 9. Monitoring at Home

- a. Check the person with head lice every 2-3 days for at least two weeks and regularly thereafter. Watch especially for scratching, live lice, and any new nits that are located close to the scalp.
- b. Head lice are easier to eliminate in your child if they are detected, treated and controlled early. Please call your school nurse or your child's health care provider if you have further questions or concerns.

## Students

## Legal Reference:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC, 2010)  
<http://www.cdc.gov/parasites/lice/head/>

Frankowski, B.L., & Bocchini, J.A., and Council on School Health and Committee on Infectious Diseases. (2010). Head Lice. *Pediatrics*, 126, 392. Available at:  
<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/126/2/392.full.html>.

National Association of School Nurses. (2011) *Position Statement: Pediculosis Management in the School Setting*. Available at:  
<http://www.nasn.org/PolicyAdvocacy/PositionPapersandReports/NASNPositionStatementsFullView/tabid/462/ArticleId/40/Pediculosis-Management-in-the-School-Setting-Revised-2011>

University of Texas, School of Nursing, Family Nurse Practitioner Program. (2008) *Guidelines for the diagnosis and treatment of pediculosis capitis (head lice) in children and adults* 2008. Austin (TX): University of Texas, School of Nursing.

Administrative Regulation adopted:	August 18, 1986
Administrative Regulation reviewed:	December 19, 2000
Administrative Regulation adopted:	January 26, 2015