

Information From the Tabernacle School Nurses



Head lice are always present in our community. Occasionally throughout the school year, a few of our students may develop scalp itch and be found to have lice or nits (lice eggs in casing). In an effort to assist you in monitoring your child for head lice and ease your efforts in treating your child's head lice, we offer the following information.

1. Parents are the first line of defense. Parents can check their children for head lice periodically (once every few weeks). Head lice are small insects about the size of a sesame seed. They move quickly on the scalp when the hair is parted to avoid detection. They do not fly or jump. When a child has a live louse on their scalp they lay eggs (nits) which are affixed tightly to the hair shaft. Nits are pearly white or grey in color and are teardrop shaped. Nits can't be washed off or easily moved like dandruff.
2. Prevention can help. Head lice are spread from head to head contact, as lice crawl from one head to another. They can also be spread if a person with lice shares hair brushes, hats or pillows with another. Encourage your child to avoid sharing hats and hair care items with others. Although less common than spread from head to head contact, it also promotes good healthy habits.
3. If you think your child has head lice, contact the school nurse. Confidentiality is always of utmost importance in the nurse's office. We will be happy to provide your child with privacy if you are in need of assistance in determining if your child has lice. Documentation of treatment must be provided to the School Nurse on the following school day. Siblings and classmates will also be screened at the nurse's discretion.

If your child has head lice several steps can help to eliminate it.

1. Apply a lice killing shampoo. Please follow directions carefully. No prescription is needed and the shampoo can be purchased at your local retailer.
2. After shampooing, inspect child's hair to remove all nits. This can be very tedious and time consuming, but is necessary to help prevent recurrence. A fine tooth comb can be helpful, along with lots of patience! Seating your child in an area with lots of natural light can also assist in locating and removing nits.
3. Continue with daily inspection of your child's hair for nits. A repeated treatment of lice killing shampoo is recommended in 7-10 days. More frequent treatment is not recommended since it will not help remove nits and exposes your child to unnecessary medication. It is also not recommended to treat other family members unless they too have lice or nits!
4. Wash and dry all bedding and recently worn clothing in the hottest setting possible. Clean all hair articles in hottest water. Thoroughly vacuum furniture and carpets, as well as car seats.

A Final Note

Head lice are not an indication of neglect or poor hygiene. They have been present since the days of the Egyptian mummies and are, very simply, pests. They do not spread any disease and are not responsible for illness. We need to take steps to eliminate the pest without causing any harm (physical or emotional) to the child.