



JPII Schools head Lice Identification and Management Protocol March 2024

Objectives:

1. Assure fair treatment for all students affected by head lice.
2. Assist parents in the process of monitoring and resolving problems.
3. Avoid misdiagnosis and unneeded school absences.
4. Provide evidence-based and consistent head lice information to parents and students.

Prevention:

1. Remind students not to share headgear, hats, etc.
2. Avoid head-to-head contact such as hugging.
3. Avoid close contact with other students.

Head lice:

1. Active Lice
 - Active head lice infestations are characterized by clusters of nits laid close ($\frac{1}{4}$ inch) to the scalp and/or the presence of live lice. The color of nits can be yellow, light brown or white. They can take on the color of the hair somewhat. The adult louse is flat, wingless and crawls. It does not have the ability to fly, hop, or jump.
2. Inactive Lice
 - Nits found individually in different locations of the head, more than $\frac{1}{4}$ inch away from the scalp, would characterize inactive cases of head lice, possibly from a prior (now resolved) infestation. Older nits naturally are moved farther out on the hair shaft due to combing and hair growth. Empty nit cases will look translucent but may still be attached to the hair shaft.

Protocol:

1. The school nurse or designated staff will check any student reported to possibly have head lice.
2. If head lice/nits are found, the teacher will be informed.
3. Parents will be notified. The parent may pick up child at this time. It is not necessary for a student to be removed immediately from the classroom.
4. When the parent comes to pick up their child:
 - Give parents a head lice home action plan (*Head Lice Fact Sheet*) and encourage them to take steps to rid head lice from the home environment.
 - Students should return to school the next day with the head lice treatment intervention having taken place.
 - Encourage parents to talk to other parents of their child's close playmates.
5. Siblings of the student with an active infestation and close playmates may be screened for head lice. If an active case is identified their parents will be notified.
6. Letters to parents of classmates will **NOT** be sent and names of affected students may not be shared with classmates' parents. Staff should also protect the privacy of affected students. The risk of getting lice from another classmate is very small.

7. If the identified student is in pre-school or kindergarten the principal and/or school nurse will determine if the entire classroom needs to be screened. Parental consent is not required for classroom screening.

Return to school procedure:

1. Parents will notify the school that treatment has been completed before the student returns to school.
2. Ask the parent to check their child daily for 2 weeks for signs of reinfestation and to continue to comb out the old nits. The removal of all nits is encouraged for aesthetic purposes, but not required for school attendance.
3. Encourage parents to repeat treatment with the pediculicidal product 9 days after the initial treatment, if not otherwise indicated on the product label. This should kill any newly hatched lice prior to them maturing and gaining their ability to lay nits.

Parent information:

1. JPPII Schools Head Lice Identification and Management Protocol will be linked on JPPII website.

Important points to remember:

- Our attitudes about lice can make a student feel unaccepted or discriminated against. Head lice can affect anyone; do not carry disease; do not fly or jump; are transmitted more often in out-of-school activities than in school; are transmitted through close contact. Getting rid of head lice is a process of checking and removing nits for several weeks. Be patient with parents who are doing all they can to resolve this problem.

Resources

<https://www.hhs.nd.gov/sites/www/files/documents/DOH%20Legacy/Family%20Planning/Garantees/References/Head%20Lice.pdf>

<https://www.hhs.nd.gov/sites/www/files/documents/DOH%20Legacy/Diseases%2C%20Conditions%20and%20Immunization/Diseases/HeadLice%20.pdf>

<http://www.cdc.gov/parasites/lice/head/schools.html>