

**Katonah-Lewisboro School District
Coordinator of Nursing Services
60 North Salem Road, Rt. 121
Cross River, New York 10518**

THE FACTS ABOUT HEADLICE

Dear KLS D Families,

Knowing that pediculosis (head lice) is a condition that, understandably, causes worry and can cause great inconvenience for families, we are providing the following information. Given that schools were once places where nurses did periodic checks for head lice, it is understandable that families might associate the condition with school. In more recent years, however, the medical community and available research have taken a different stance on how schools should address the issue. Our effort here is to make you aware of what we do in school and what you can be doing at home.

It is the position of the National Association of School Nurses that the management of pediculosis should **not disrupt** the educational process. No disease is associated with head lice and **in-school transmission is considered to be rare**. (Frankowski & Bocchini, 2010) The academy of Pediatrics is also in agreement and they “no longer agree with a no nit policy at school.” In other words, while it was once recommended that a child stay out of school, that is no longer the case. If a child is showing symptoms in school, we will check that child. Depending on what we find, the child’s parent or guardian may be notified that day by telephone **or** by having a note sent home with the child at the end of the school day stating that prompt, proper treatment of this condition is in the best interest of the child.

By the time a child with an active head lice infestation has been identified, he or she has likely had the infestation for one month or more and, therefore, **poses little additional risk of transmission to others** (Frankowski & Bocchini, 2010). It is important to note that head lice are not a health hazard or a sign of poor hygiene and are not responsible for the spread of any disease.

Starting a few years ago, like many of our neighboring districts, the KLS D Nurses stopped conducting class wide head checks for lice. We do still notify the parents of any child suspected of having a case of head lice so that they may notify their physician and treat according to his/her recommendations. In some instances, if a high percentage of children in a classroom are found to have head lice, the parents of all children in that particular class may be notified.

For additional information regarding head lice, please refer to the American Academy of Pediatrics website at <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/126/2/392.full>

What you can do at home:

Please be vigilant about checking your family members for head lice and remind your children not to borrow hats, brushes, combs, etc. from other people. The following is information to help you be aware of symptoms. If you think that a family member has head lice, you should consult your physician for a diagnosis and preferred treatment.

The signs and symptoms are:

- a tickling feeling of something moving in the hair
- itching (caused by the an allergic reaction to the bites)
- sores on the head (caused by scratching)
- these sores on the head can sometimes become infected
- irritability

Treatment:

Over-the-counter (OTC) or prescription medications are used to treat the affected people and their families. Follow these treatment steps:

1. Remove all clothing.
2. Apply lice medicine, also called pediculicide, according to the label instructions. If your child has extra-long hair, you may need to use a second bottle.
WARNING: Do not use a cream rinse or combination shampoo/conditioner before using lice medicine. Do not rewash hair for one to two days after treatment.
3. Have the infested person put on clean clothing after treatment.
4. If some live lice are still found 8 to 12 hours after treatment but are moving more slowly than before, do not retreat. Comb dead and remaining live lice out of the hair. The medicine sometimes takes longer to kill the lice.
5. If, 8 to 12 hours after treatment, no dead lice are found and lice seem as active as before, the medicine may not be working. See your health care professional for a different medication and follow their treatment instructions.
6. Nit (head lice egg) combs, often found in lice medicine packages should be used to remove nits and lice from the hair shaft. Many flea combs made for cats and dogs are also effective.
7. After the initial treatment, check, comb, and remove nits and lice from hair every two to three days.
8. Retreat in 7 to 10 days.
9. Check all treated people for two to three weeks until you are sure all lice and nits are gone.

We hope all this information is helpful to you, and we wish you a good school year.

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