

A Letter from the School Health Office



November 9, 2011

Dear Parents,

As the cold weather approaches and students become more confined to the indoors, the possibility of head lice incidence increases. In an effort to keep this incidence to a minimum, please continue to routinely check your child's hair for nits and lice. If in fact these are discovered, please let school know so that immediate action can be taken. Here are a few tips when checking your child's head:

- Use good lighting. Make sure you use a well-lit area. If lice are present, once they are exposed to light, they will move away from the light source. You will notice movement on your child's scalp.
- Check sections of hair and scalp. Pin or pull back the opposite section that you are checking. In the area being checked, separate the hair in small sections, checking close to the scalp and down to the middle of the hair shafts.
- Nits or lice eggs will be near the scalp and hair root. They are white and appear as dandruff. They are distinguished by their ability to stick to the hair shaft when trying to remove them. Dandruff is easily removed and nits are not. Nits will be clustered together. You will see a few or many on the hair shaft. These need to be manually removed. You can also use a very fine-tooth comb to help remove nits. Keep all combs in a plastic baggy after use to avoid further infestation. Treatment with special lice shampoo will ensure that any live lice are killed.
- Live lice are visible and move about in the hair. They are the size of sesame seeds and are brown in color. They must be removed with a special shampoo, which is available at all pharmacies.
- If nits or lice are discovered, all other family members should be checked thoroughly and the environment will need to be cleaned well. All linens should be washed in hot water and all carpeting should be vacuumed. Pillows and stuffed animals should be bagged and sealed for 72 hours. This deprives oxygen to any potential lice or nit.

Please consult with your pediatrician or school nurse if you are in doubt. We are a phone call away to help with any questions or concerns regarding identifying infestation and how to proceed.

The best recommendation is prevention. Some suggestions include:

- Keep your child's head gear in their sleeves when in school and keep jackets hung up. Avoid leaving them on the floor or rugs. These are means of travel for lice.
- Have your child bring their own pillow to 'sleepovers.'
- Remind your child not to share hats, hair accessories, or other personal care items.
- Consider braids or pony tails to prevent hair from hanging free.

As per the District 96 Parent Handbook, students will be checked for head lice at school on an "as needed" basis. This includes children with symptoms of 'itchiness to scalp,' and those students who are in a classroom with a confirmed case of lice or nits. You will be notified in the event that your child has been identified as having an infestation. A letter will be sent via email if any cases of lice or nits have been found in your child's class. Your support is greatly appreciated in continuing to routinely check your child's hair at home in an effort to keep head lice incidence to a minimum.

Sincerely,

Jeanne Duffy, School Nurse

Mindy Keller, Principal