

HEAD LICE PARENT INFORMATION AND GUIDELINES

GENERAL INFORMATION: Head lice are a common problem among school children and occur in all socio-economic groups regardless of age, gender, or personal hygiene. Parents should take responsibility to check the entire family often and follow the guidelines suggested to control head lice.

Head lice do not hop, jump or fly. They are acquired by coming in direct contact with the infested person. Using the same hat, comb or brush, or lying on contaminated furniture, carpet, or bed linens, may spread them.

Some of the signs of head lice are, intense itching of the scalp, redness or small bite marks on the scalp, swollen glands on the back of the neck behind the ears, tiny gray adult lice on the hair and scalp, or the lice eggs which are called nits. These nits/eggs are like grains of sugar, which are attached to the hair shaft near the scalp.

TREATMENT: All family members should be checked before beginning treatment. If any other family members show evidence of lice or nits, they should be treated at the same time.

There are many treatment options available. These options should be discussed with a pharmacist or other health care provider. If any cuts or extensive scratches are on the scalp, please consult with your family physician before using any treatments. No treatment products should be applied to an infant's scalp. The nits should be manually removed. It is very important to follow the directions exactly for any product that is used.

After the treatment has been done according to the directions provided, you must manually remove any nits present on the hair. A bright light shining above the head will make it easier for you to see the nits. A fine tooth comb sometimes helps but it may be necessary to manually remove each nit. Some treatment products will not kill all the nits. If they remain on the hair, they will hatch out in 7 to 10 days and the cycle will begin again. Please continue to check the hair and scalp for at least 10 days following treatment. A second treatment in 7 to 10 days may be required to kill the newly hatched lice from eggs left after the first treatment.

You should machine wash all washable clothing and bed linens which the person has come in contact with for the last three days using HOT water and dry them in a HOT dryer. Non-washable items such as furniture and carpet should be vacuumed.

THE SCHOOL'S RESPONSIBILITY: Schools are mandated by the State Health Department to control head lice. Enterprise City Schools will adhere to the following procedure:

1. Once head lice/nits have been detected, the child's parent will be notified to pick up the child and take the child home to begin treatment. The child will not be allowed to return to school until treatment has begun and an attempt has been made to remove the nits. The number of days a child may be excused will be discussed with the parent at that time.
2. A parent should accompany the child when he/she returns to school to be rechecked by the school nurse before going to class. If treatment has not been done, the child will again be sent home with the parent, however, no days will be excused.
3. The school nurse will check the child again in 7 to 10 days to ensure that the treatment has been effective.

PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY: It is the parent's responsibility to ensure that treatment is completed for their child. It is also important that parents notify any people outside the school setting that the child has come in contact with such as playmates and other family members so that a possible outbreak may be controlled. Parental cooperation and honesty can help us control this problem.