

Just a Reminder that Fall and Winter are prime seasons not only for the flu bug, but for another bug as well-lice. It is important for parents/guardians to be proactive and continue to check their child's head weekly and treat only if live lice are found. If you find your child does in fact have head lice, please contact your school nurse to discuss treatment options. As always, should you have concerns or questions, please feel free to contact your school nurse.

## HEAD LICE FACT SHEET

### What are head lice?

- Head lice are tiny, crawling insects that can live on the scalp
- Lice do NOT have wings and cannot jump or fly, although they can crawl very quickly
- Lice have not been known to survive off the head for longer than 2 days
- Head lice can lay eggs, called nits
- Lice prefer to remain in the hair, not the environment

### How do head lice spread?

- Head lice spread by close head-to-head contact that can allow lice to crawl from one person's head to another
- Lice can also spread by sharing certain items such as: helmets, towels, washcloths, pillows, combs, brushes, hair bows, and hats.

### What happens when a person gets head lice?

- The most common sign of head lice is itching especially at the neck and behind the ears. However, with a student's first case of head lice, itching may not develop for 4-6 weeks.
- A person will see tiny, white nits (lice eggs) attached to the hair close to the scalp. The nits look like dandruff flakes or sand but are not easy to remove.
- Lice look like flat insects about 2-4mm in length (about the size of a sesame seed), have 6 legs, each leg equipped with a claw, and can be tan or grayish-white in color.
- The presence of nits alone does not indicate an active infestation. The gold standard for diagnosing head lice is finding a live louse on the head

### Who can get head lice?

- Anyone can get head lice! Getting head lice has nothing to do with cleanliness or socioeconomic status.
- Head lice infestation is common in the US among children 3-12 years of age; approximately 6-12 million have infestations each year.

### How does a person get rid of head lice?

- There are special shampoos that are made to kill lice. Your health care practitioner may prescribe other products. Talk with your doctor or pharmacist about the best treatment for your child
- All products must be used exactly as the instructions on the label say. An adult should apply the product
  - Vacuum rugs, furniture, pillows, mattresses and the seats of the car
  - Wash bedding, towels, and clothes you have recently worn in hot water and dry them in the dryer on high heat for at least 20 minutes
  - Soak combs, brushes, hair clips in very hot water (at least 130 degrees F) for at least 10 minutes
  - Vacuum non-washable items like dolls and stuffed animals or seal them in an airtight bag for 2 weeks to kill any remaining lice
  - All household members should be checked for head lice. Anyone showing signs of infestation should also be treated. If head lice and or nits are found less than ¼ inch from the scalp on a child 2 years old or less, treatment advice should be sought from a health care practitioner.