

Head Lice Advice

The information in this packet has been gathered from various sources in an effort to assist parents in both the prevention and treatment of head lice. Franklin Regional School District maintains a "No Nit" Policy (#4302).

Head Lice Information

Head lice are tiny insect parasites that live on the human head, feeding on the scalp several times a day. Head lice reproduce by laying their eggs (nits) on the hair shaft close to the scalp. They are not a health hazard, don't carry diseases and are not a sign of poor hygiene.

- The life cycle of lice occurs in three stages
 1. **Stage one** - eggs- lice eggs known as "nits". Nits are tiny grey-white oval eggs about the size of a grain of salt that are attached at an angle to the hair shaft. Nits are adhered stubbornly to hairs by an adhesive substance excreted by the female. Nits require manual removal with a lice comb or your fingernails. Nits that are likely to hatch are located within ¼ inch of the scalp and will hatch in about a week. Nits can be confused with dandruff, flakes of hairspray and sand.
 2. **Stage two** -the "Nymph Stage" lasts about 7-10 days. Lice in this stage are very small (1-2mm) and have a light brown appearance.
 3. **Stage three**- "Adult Stage" is when nymphs mature into adult lice. Adult lice are about the size of a sesame seed, usually dark brown, and move quickly. A female can produce viable eggs for the duration of her adult life which is usually 30 days. She can lay about 3-4 eggs daily, totaling 150 eggs is a 30 day period.
- Head lice spread through direct contact – head to head. Lice do not fly, jump or swim.
- Head lice can also be spread through indirect contact – sharing combs, hair brushes, hats, stuffed animals and shared surfaces..
- Pets do not give head lice to humans, humans do not give lice to pets. Lice live only on humans.



Screening Process

Every morning before leaving for school, students should be checked for redness of the scalp, nits or lice.

Equipment needed:

1. Applicator stick or long tailed comb to separate the hair.
2. Good light source – natural light, bright lamp or strong flashlight

Screening steps:

1. Separate the hair into small sections
2. Examine the hair behind the ears, back of the neck and scalp for crawling lice or attached nits. If no nits or lice are visible in these areas, continue to inspect the rest of the head.
3. Examine the scalp for redness, irritation or scratch marks

If lice or nits are found, keep your child home and notify the School Nurse. Start treatment process – student and home care. Check all family members for lice and nits.

Treatment Process – Student Care

1. Get medication for lice from your doctor or drugstore.
 - Permethrin 1% is currently the recommended treatment, several other over-the-counter preparations are available.
2. Treat head and scalp ONLY AS DIRECTED by the manufacturer of the treatment you choose.
 - Hair should be completely wet with the medication
 - Set time for the length of time that the medication is to remain in the hair.
 - Completely rinse medication from hair.
3. Divide hair into sections. Then, with a nit comb (included in most commercial treatment products), comb through hair, pulling out all nits. Nits may need to be pulled out with fingernails. Clean the nit comb after each pass through the hair with rubbing alcohol or soapy water. Continue this removal process until ALL nits have been removed from the hair.
4. When you feel that ALL nits and lice have been removed from the head, please drive your child to school for the School Nurse to inspect and clear them for return to class. Student should return wearing laundered clothing, coats, hats. etc.

Treatment process – Home Care

1. Collect all bedding – sheets, pillows, blankets and machine wash items at hottest temperature (150 degrees)
2. After washing, put bedding into dryer set at hottest temperature setting for at least 20 minutes or until dry.
3. Pillows and stuffed animals that cannot be washed must be put into a plastic bag, tied off and left completely closed for at least 14 days.
4. Wash all clothing recently worn (within last 2 weeks) include hats, scarves and coats.
5. Vacuum thoroughly (all soft surfaces where head might have touched)Rugs ,Couches, Chairs, Car head rest, Car seats
6. Wash all combs and brushes in disinfectant solution for 30 minutes.(disinfectant: one quart of water with 1 ½ teaspoons of Lysol or treatment solution) or boil for 10 minutes.

Common Treatment Problems

1. Often people do not follow manufacturer's directions **exactly** as written on the product label. Incorrectly following package directions may lead to the product not being completely effective.
2. Often people re-treat the head because the nits are still present after the first treatment. **There is not head lice medication that gets rid of nits. Nits must be manually removed with fingernails or a nit comb.**
3. Often people treat the head to prevent lice. When lice are not present, treatment or repeated treatment can lead to scalp irritation. Overuse of some products can be poisonous or may cause lice to become drug- resistant.
4. Continued itching after treatment is mistaken for persistent lice infestation. Lice medications can be drying to the scalp and itching may occur as a result of their use.
5. Often hair spray, hair products and dry scalp can be mistaken for nits. Dry scalp flakes will remove when touched – nits are “glued” in place. When in doubt, it is best to check the head after a through shampooing.
6. Not completely treating the home and household items.
7. Not sharing the discovery of lice or nits with the school, friends and others in recent close contact. **Lice will be harder to control once spread to multiple other people and may make their way back to you!** Successful control of outbreaks depends upon education, cooperation and communication.

Health Promotion and Prevention Tips

1. Check your child's hair regularly for head lice and nits (see “screening process”)
2. Tie long hair back – braid and or put up if possible.
3. Consider applying hair gel or mousse – these do not prevent or repel lice but may help to keep stray hair strands from contact with other students
4. Remind your child to avoid head-to-head contact with other children in classrooms or playing.
5. Avoid sharing combs. Brushed, hat, helmets.
6. Investigate all areas for possible sources of lice contact – after school activities like athletics, gymnastics, sleep over parties, etc.
7. If you discover that your child has head lice – contact the school and other areas of possible origin contact.

Thank you for your cooperation in helping to control and prevent the spread of head lice at Franklin Regional.

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