

What Are Head Lice?

Head lice are tiny insects that live on the scalp, feeding on blood. They are not harmful, do not spread diseases, and are not a sign of poor hygiene. However, lice can be uncomfortable and cause itching.

How are Lice Spread?

Lice spread through close head-to-head contact, which is why they're common in settings where children play closely. Lice cannot jump or fly but can move quickly between heads that touch.

What to Look For:

- **Itching or Redness:** Persistent itching or small red bumps on the scalp, especially around the nape of the neck and behind the ears.
- **Presence of Nits:** Nits are the tiny white or yellowish eggs of lice. They are firmly attached to the hair shaft close to the scalp and may look like dandruff but cannot be brushed off easily.
- **Live Lice:** Adult lice are small (about the size of a sesame seed) and brownish-gray in color. They move quickly, so it may be challenging to spot them.

Steps for Checking and Managing Lice

Regular checks at home can make it easier to catch lice early. here's how to check:

1. **Wet the Hair:** Dampen your student's hair and use a fine-tooth comb to section it into small areas. Look closely for nits or lice.
2. **Treat if Necessary:** If you discover lice, over the counter treatments are available at most pharmacies. Follow the product instructions carefully and be sure to treat all members of the household if necessary.
3. **Remove Nits:** Use a lice comb to remove as many nits as possible after treatment. Combing is essential to remove remaining eggs, as these can cause a new cycle of lice.
4. **Recheck:** After treatment, check hair every 2-3 days to ensure lice and nits are gone, and repeat the treatment after about 7-10 days, if necessary, as some eggs may not be affected by the initial application.

Tips to Prevent the Spread of Lice

Preventing lice is all about limiting head-to-head contact and sharing of personal items. Please remind your child of the following:

- **Avoid Head-to-Head contact:** Especially during playtime.
- **Do Not Share Personal Items:** Encourage children not to share hats, scarves, brushes, hair ties, or headphones, as lice can cling to items that come into contact with hair.

Working Together

Lice management works best when we work together as a school community. We encourage open communication with school nurses and appreciate your efforts in checking and treating lice at home if needed.