



Head Lice Policy

Head lice infestations are a common problem for children in childcare settings and schools. Anyone can get head lice. There are two kinds of lice that infest people, but they do not live on the head. Parents should check their child(ren) for head lice regularly. If they find lice or eggs, use the information provided below.

CAUSE

Pediculus humanus capitis, a louse.

Head lice are very small (less than 1/8" long, about this size [--]), brownish-colored insects that live on human heads and lay their eggs (nits) close to the scalp. The eggs are tiny (about the size of the eye of a small needle) and gray or white in color. Adult lice move fast and do not like light.

SYMPTOMS

Itching of the head and neck. Look for: 1) crawling lice in the hair, usually few in number; 2) eggs (nits) glued to the hair, often found behind the ears and at the back of the neck; and 3) scratch marks on the head or back of the neck at the hairline.

SPREAD

Lice are spread by head-to-head contact and by sharing personal items such as combs (especially on picture day), sports head gear, brushes, barrettes, hats, scarves, jackets, blankets, sheets, pillowcases, stuffed animals, play activity clothes, and hats. Head lice may be spread during sleepovers.

Lice do not jump or fly; they crawl and can fall off the head. Head lice do not live longer than 48 hours off the head. They only lay their eggs while on the head.

INCUBATION

It takes 7 to 10 days from when the eggs are laid until they hatch.

CONTAGIOUS PERIOD

Until treated with a lice treatment product.

EXCLUSION

Childcare and School: Until first treatment is completed and no live lice or nits are seen. Children should be sent home immediately if lice are detected; however they should not return until effective treatment is given.



Green Hills Head Start

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Head Lice Policy Cont.

TREATMENT

- Call a healthcare provider or pharmacist for advice. Recommended treatment includes using either an over-the-counter (OTC) or prescription medicated (lice killing) product. Use products that contain permethrin or a pyrethrin-based shampoo. Refer to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (<http://www.cdc.gov/lice/head/>) for the most current head lice treatment guidelines.
- Follow the product directions carefully (especially the **amount of product to use, length of time on the hair, and whether to use on dry or damp hair**). Directions will vary, depending on the product used.
- With certain products a second treatment is recommended 7 to 10 days later to kill any lice that may have hatched after the first treatment.
- It may take 24 hours for products to kill lice.
- Lice treatment products are not 100% effective in killing lice, especially nits. Removing the nits (nitpicking) is an essential part of the treatment for controlling the spread of head lice. The nits are glued onto the hair shaft as they are laid and require effort to remove. To remove the nits, use a metal nit comb, cat flea comb, or your fingernails to slide eggs off the hair shafts, or use scissors to cut the hair shafts that have nits glued to them. Continue checking the head and combing hair daily for 2 weeks. If all nits within ½" of the scalp are not removed, some may hatch and the child will be infested again. **Remember: it takes at least 2 weeks to get rid of lice.**
- Check all household members for head lice. Treat only household members with head lice, and treat all at the same time.
- Many alternatives to OTC or prescription head lice control products have been suggested. CDC does not have clear scientific evidence to determine if suffocation of head lice with mayonnaise, olive oil, margarine, butter, or similar substances is an effective form of treatment.

PREVENTION/CONTROL

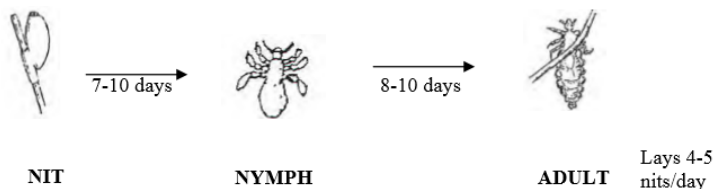
- DO NOT share combs, brushes, other hair grooming items and other hair accessories (barrettes, etc.), towels, bedding, clothing, hats, and headgear, such as personal headphones and sports helmets.
- Hang coats, jackets, and caps in individual lockers or on assigned coat hooks. If this is not possible, put the clothing in separate plastic bags. Bedding, when not in use for naptime, can be stored in individual plastic bags or storage boxes.
- Parents should check their child's head frequently throughout the year. If one person in a household, childcare, school, etc., has head lice, others should be checked too. Sleepovers are a common setting in which head lice are spread. When a child returns from a sleepover, check the child's head and launder any bedding that they brought home.



Head Lice Policy Cont.

- Clean all combs, brushes, other hair grooming items and accessories (barrettes, etc.) by doing one of the following:
 - soaking in the lice treatment product for 10 minutes.
 - cleaning with hot soapy water.
 - boiling for 5 minutes.
- Vacuum carpets, upholstered furniture, mattresses, and seats in the car(s) thoroughly. **Insecticide sprays are NOT recommended** because this will expose household members to unnecessary pesticides and most viable lice are found on the head, not in the environment.
- Wash clothing worn in the last 3 days (e.g., jackets, hats, scarves, pajamas), bedding, and towels in hot (1300 F or higher) water and dry in a hot dryer for at least 20 minutes before using again. Clothing or backpacks that cannot be washed or dried, linens, and stuffed toys can be dry cleaned or sealed in plastic bags for 2 weeks.


HEAD LICE LIFE CYCLE



How to Remove Nits

Work in a well lit room or under a bright lamp (using a magnifying glass may help you see the nits)

- Divide the hair into 4 parts and divide each part into 1-inch sections.
- Starting at the scalp, use a metal nit comb, cat flea comb, or your fingernails to comb each hair section individually.
- Use the comb or your fingernail to slide eggs off the hair shaft or use scissors to cut hair shafts that have nits glued to them.
- Remove all nits each time you comb the hair.
- **REMEMBER: it can take at least 2 weeks to get rid of lice.**



For more information, call Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (MDHSS) at 573-751-6113 or 866-628-9891 (8-5 Monday thru Friday) or call your local health department.

More information about head lice can be found on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at: <http://www.cdc.gov/lice.head>.



Head Lice Policy

Green Hills Head Start, in its effort to maintain a healthy and safe environment for children and families, recognizes the need to establish a nit-free head lice policy and partner with families and health professionals to manage that policy. Therefore, the following guidelines shall be followed:

1. Head Start will conduct head lice screenings regularly: At a minimum of once a week; more often as needed. Home visitors will conduct head lice screenings during each group session and in the home as needed.
2. A child found to have head lice or nits will not be allowed to remain in the classroom or home base group location. If lice is found on a child, the Head Start staff will report this finding to the Health Specialist.
3. Head Start will immediately notify the parent/guardian of a child found to have head lice/eggs in order that the child can be taken home to begin treatment.
4. Home visitors will not be expected to conduct a home visit in a home that has a confirmed case of head lice/eggs.
5. Head Start will provide instruction to the parent/guardian about the method of treatment, procedures to be taken in the home, and possible resources available to the family.
6. Not less than twenty-four hours after treatment, the parent/guardian will accompany the child to Head Start upon return to the classroom. At that time, the child will be re-checked by the Head Start teacher or designee. (The parent/guardian will remain at school during the re-check.) If lice/eggs are still present, the child will be sent home for further treatment and referred to the family physician and/or County Health Department for assistance.
7. Within 7-10 days after the initial treatment, an affected child will need a second treatment. The parent/guardian will again accompany the child to Head Start upon return to the classroom. A head lice screening will again be required before final admittance.
8. Upon confirmation of a head lice case within a classroom, parents/guardians of non-infected children will be notified of the situation.
9. It will be the policy of Green Hills Head Start to protect the self-esteem of each child and handle each head lice case in a professional and confidential manner.
10. Untreated or chronic head lice occurrences will be subject to concern by Head Start staff, prompting the possible exploration for assistance from other resources and agencies.



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Head Lice Management Flowchart

