

Dear Parent,

A student in your child's class has been diagnosed with head lice. This letter is to inform you about head lice. The information contained in this letter was referenced from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention website (<http://www.cdc.gov/parasites/lice/index.html>).

The head louse is a tiny parasitic insect that is found on the head, and infrequently on the eyebrows and eyelashes, of people. Head lice feed on human blood several times a day and live close to the human scalp. Head lice move by crawling; they cannot hop or fly. They hold tightly to hair with hook-like claws at the end of each of their six legs. Head lice *nits* are lice eggs laid by the adult female head louse at the base of the hair shaft nearest the scalp. Nits are cemented firmly to the hair shaft and can be difficult to remove even after they hatch and empty casings remain. They are oval-shaped and very small (about the size of a knot in thread) and hard to see. Nits are often confused with dandruff, scabs, or hair spray droplets. Head lice nits usually take about 8-9 days to hatch. Eggs that are likely to hatch are usually located no more than ¼ inch from the base of the hair shaft. Nits located further than ¼ inch from the base of the hair shaft may very well already be hatched, non-viable nits, or empty nits.

Contact with an already infested person is the most common way to get head lice. Head lice are most often spread by direct head-to-head contact with the hair of an already infested person. Head-to-head contact is common during play at school, at home, and elsewhere (sports activities, playground, slumber parties, and camp).

Spread by contact with clothing (such as hats, scarves, coats) or other personal items (such as combs, brushes, or towels) used by an infested person is uncommon. The risk of getting infested by a louse that has fallen onto a carpet or furniture is very small. Head lice survive less than 1-2 days if they fall off a person and cannot feed; nits cannot hatch and usually die within a week if they are not kept at the same temperature as that found close to the scalp.

Personal hygiene or cleanliness in the home or school has nothing to do with getting head lice. Head lice are not known to spread any disease and therefore are not considered a medical or public health hazard. Head lice can be an annoyance because their presence may cause itching.

Head lice infestations can be asymptomatic, particularly with a first infestation or when an infestation is light. Itching ("pruritus") is the most common symptom of head lice infestation and is caused by an allergic reaction to louse bites. It may take 4-6 weeks for itching to appear the first time a person has head lice.

Other symptoms may include:

- a tickling feeling or a sensation of something moving in the hair;
- irritability and sleeplessness; and
- sores on the head caused by scratching. These sores caused by scratching can sometimes become infected with bacteria normally found on a person's skin.

You should examine your child's head, especially behind the ears and at the nape of the neck, for crawling lice and nits if your child exhibits symptoms of a head lice infestation. If crawling lice or nits are found, all household members should be examined for crawling lice and nits every 2-3 days. Persons with live (crawling) lice or nits within ¼ inch or less of the scalp should be treated.

For more information regarding lice see back of the letter, go to the CDC website (<http://www.cdc.gov/parasites/lice/index.html>), or visit the School District of Greenfield's website

<https://www.greenfield.k12.wi.us/district/nursing.cfm> .

WHAT TO DO IF YOUR CHILD HAS LICE

NEED TO DO IMMEDIATELY

1. DO NOT PANIC! – HEAD LICE ARE VERY TREATABLE
2. Check the heads of all your household members for lice and eggs.
3. All people with live lice and eggs should be treated with a shampoo or creame rinse made to kill lice. Read and follow the package directions closely!
4. Do not use any products that contain a conditioner prior to treatment.
5. Romove all of the eggs from the person's head. None of the products will kill all of the eggs. Any eggs left in the hair may hatch and the problem will continue.
6. Do not wash the person's hair for two days following the treatment.
7. Clean all brushes and combs by soaking them in a mixture of hot water with a small amount of bleach added. Soak for at least 20 minutes. Rinse with warm water.
8. Launder all of the clothing, coats, hats, and beding the person has been in contact with in the last 3-4 days.
9. Non-washable items can be placed in a hot dryer for 30 minutes, or placed in a platic bag for 2 weeks, or placed in the freezer for at least 48 hours.
10. Do not use sprays or bug bombs- they are not effective!
11. Insturct children not to share hats, combs, ect. with other people.

FOR THE NEXT TWO WEEKS (AND BEYOND)

12. Most lice products recommend a second treatment in 7-10 day. Read and follow the package directions closely.
13. **COMB THROUGH THE PERSON'S HAIR EVERY DAY TO CHECK FOR EGGS THAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN MISSED. IT TAKES 7-10 DAYS FOR EGGS TO HATCH.**
14. **MAKE FAMILY HEAD CHECKS PART OF YOUR WEEKLY ROUTINE.**