

Lice Guidelines

WHAT ARE LICE?

Lice (Pediculosis) are parasitic insects that can be found on people's heads and bodies. Lice survive by feeding on human blood.

COMMON SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

- Itching scalp
- Itching behind ears
- Itching on back of neck
- May be asymptomatic

CONTAGIOUS TIME PERIOD:

While live lice are present.

TIME FROM EXPOSURE TO SYMPTOMS:

4-6 weeks after first infestation. 1-6 weeks after subsequent infestations.

SPREAD BY:

Direct contact or contaminated objects. Lice do not fly or jump. They can only crawl from surface to surface.

TREATMENT / SELF-CARE:

There are many acceptable treatment options (OTC medications or lice treatment centers). Treatment with a product that is both a pediculicide and ovoidal (egg killing agent) is most effective.

ACTION AT SCHOOL:

Students with live head lice do not need to be sent home early from school but can go home at the end of the day, be treated, and return to school after appropriate treatment has begun and proof of proper treatment is obtained. Students with nits only will be monitored for signs of re-infestation.

CONSIDERATIONS AND PREVENTION MEASURES:

All household members should be examined if lice or nits are found on a family member. Only those with evidence of an infestation should be treated. All combs and brushes used on infected persons should be soaked in hot water (>130 F) Lysol, rubbing alcohol, or a lice-killing chemical for about 1 hour. Clothing, bedding, hats, and other items the person used should be washed in hot water or machine dried on the hottest setting for 20 minutes. Carpets, furniture, and mattresses should be vacuumed thoroughly and the vacuum bag discarded. Storing items in a plastic ziplock bag for 2 weeks is also effective in killing lice. Avoid sharing personal items such as combs, hair accessories, towels, coats, hats, scarves, pillows, and stuffed animals that the infected individual uses.

