

Lice in the School Setting

Definitions:

Lice: Tiny grey to brown insects about the size of a sesame seed that live in human hair and feed on human blood to survive. Lice do not fly or jump, but crawl. Without a human host they can only live for about one or two days.

Nits: Tiny white oval-shaped louse eggs about the size of a knot in a thread attached to strands of hair.

Professional Nurse: is a nurse who has a certificate of registration under s. 441.06 or who is licensed as a registered nurse in a party state, as defined in s. 441.50 (2) (j) who performs for compensation of any act in the observation or care of the ill, injured, or infirm, or for the maintenance of health or prevention of illness of others, that requires substantial nursing skill, knowledge, or training, or application of nursing principles based on biological, physical, and social sciences, herein referred to as the School Nurse.

Medical Advisor: physician licensed to practice in the State of Wisconsin

Policy

- The lice management program will be under the direction of the Melrose-Mindoro School District's Registered Nurse.
- The School District shall have trained individuals who will implement the program.
- The Medical Advisor (MA), in conjunction with the Registered Nurse, community agencies such as public health, and other designated community or parent members shall review the program and policy periodically to ensure that it is meeting the needs of the school district and its families and is following best practice.

Administrative Rule:

School District Administrator:

- In consultation with Melrose-Mindoro School District's Registered Nurse and medical advisor will ensure that the lice prevention and treatment program/policies/protocols are in place and reviewed periodically.
- In collaboration with Melrose-Mindoro School District's Registered Nurse, identify and assign responsible individuals to assist in providing guidance for the lice prevention and treatment program.
- Make confidential space available for implementing the lice prevention and treatment program in each occupied school building within the district.

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- Will understand and support that mass screenings do not have any scientific basis for being done, and are not good use of nursing time. 2

Medical Advisor:

The Medical Advisor will:

- Provide school district staff and parents with information on head lice infestations and treatments.2
- Take an active role as information resources for families, schools, and other community agencies.2

Nurse:

The Nurse will:

- Check a student's head for lice if he/she is demonstrating symptoms being sure to provide the student privacy.
- Train school personnel
 - On how to check a student's head if he or she is demonstrating symptoms of head lice, such as frequent scratching or complaining of itching.
 - The importance and difficulty of correctly diagnosing an active head lice infestation. 2
 - On appropriate treatment options. 2
- Educate school staff regarding head lice causes, treatment and common misconceptions such as:
 - Getting head lice is not related to cleanliness of the person or his/her environment.
 - Head lice are mainly spread by direct contact with the hair of an infested person.
 - Head lice are not known to transmit disease.2
 - Head lice move by crawling, not hopping or flying.
 - Head lice are not reportable to the public health departments unless there are other communicable disease related concerns.
- Educate students and their families about how to prevent lice and what to do if a family member has lice.

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- Collaborate with the Public Health Department or other resources in planning assistance to families who have chronic infestation. 3

Parents:

- Examine child's head, especially behind the ears and at the nape of the neck for crawling lice and nits.
- 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. 1, 2, 4
- Head lice treatment must be followed exactly as instructed on the package.
- Removal of all nits after successful treatment with a pediculicide is not necessary. Nits that are attached more than ¼ inch from the base of the hair shaft are almost always non-viable.2
- Soak all combs and brushes in very hot water for about 1 hour, may add some anti-lice shampoo.
- Wash sheets, blankets, bedding in hot water.
- Seal stuffed animals in a plastic bag for 2 weeks or, if possible, wash in hot water.
- Vacuum carpets, car seat, furniture and mattresses thoroughly.
- Retreat hair according to treatment protocol.

Head Lice Protocol

Treatment protocol recommendations:

- Students diagnosed with live head lice do not need to be sent home early from school; they can go home at the end of the day, be treated, and return to school following appropriate treatment. 2
- Students diagnosed with live head lice should be discouraged from close direct head contact with others; however they should not be removed from the classroom. 2 Long hair should be worn back.
- The child's parent or guardian will be notified that day by telephone, and a head lice information from Gundersen Health System website will be sent home with the child.
- There are many acceptable treatment options; however treatment with a product that is both a pediculicide as well as ovicidal is the most sure way to kill lice and prevent further re-infestation. 1
- Students with nits-only should be monitored for signs of re-infestation. 1, 3
- Letters will not routinely be sent home with classmates. 2

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References:

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC, 2010)
<http://www.cdc.gov/parasites/lice/head/>
2. Frankowski, B. L., & Bocchini, J.A., and Council on School Health and Committee on Infectious Diseases. (2010). Head Lice. *Pediatrics*, 126, 392. Available at:
<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/126/2/392.full.html>.
3. National Association of School Nurses. (2011). *Position Statement: Pediculosis Management in the School Setting*. Available at:
<http://www.nasn.org/PolicyAdvocacy/PositionPapersandReports/NASNPositionStatementsFullView/tabid/462/ArticleId/40/Pediculosis-Management-in-the-School-Setting-Revised-2011>
4. University of Texas, School of Nursing, Family Nurse Practitioner Program. (2008) *Guidelines for the diagnosis and treatment of pediculosis capitis (head lice) in children and adults 2008*. Austin (TX): University of Texas, School of Nursing
5. School Nurse Summer Institute 2013, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction