

**URBANA SCHOOL DISTRICT #116
UPDATED HEAD LICE POLICY**

Evidence based practices from Illinois Department of Public Health, Center for Disease Control and American Pediatric Association recommendations include:

- Screening of family members and close contacts
- No regular screenings or rechecks
- No notification of classmate parents (if there are multiple cases in one classroom the nurse will determine if all students need checked)
- Notification of parent (of affected child) at the end of the day by phone or note indicating that prompt, proper treatment is in the best interest of the child and his/her classmates

Outdated practices no longer recommended:

- Classroom wide screening if one student has head lice
- Notes home to parents of classmates
- Immediate exclusion for infestation
- Nit-free policies

GENERAL INFORMATION

Head lice (*pediculus humanus capitis*) are a nuisance but they have not been shown to spread disease. Research has shown that head lice do not survive for longer than 1 day when not on the head, and the eggs only hatch when they are incubated by body heat near the scalp. Transmission occurs primarily through head to head contact and infrequently through indirect contact with shared personal belongings. Contrary to popular belief, lice do not jump from one host to another, they crawl.

IDENTIFICATION

- A. Adult lice are gray, about 1/16 inch long.
- B. Nits are the lice eggs. Many nits are more than ¼ inch from the scalp and are usually not viable and very unlikely to hatch or may in fact be empty ‘casings’.
- C. Nits are cemented to the hair shaft and are unlikely to be transferred to other people.
- D. If a child is discovered to have live lice they have likely had it for more than 1 month and do not pose a significant risk to others. Therefore, they should NOT be removed from the classroom.

TEACHER/SCHOOL RESPONSE

- A. If a teacher, teaching assistant, or other staff observe either nits (lice eggs) or live lice on a student, they notify the office/principal/nurse, who will send home notification and treatment information with the student at the end of the school day.
- B. The building administrator or designee provides the student/family with 1% Premethrin shampoo recommended by AAP and directions for use.
- C. The student remains in the classroom and is NOT excluded from activities.
- D. Students are NOT rechecked by school staff.
- E. The school nurse should remind parents 7-10 days after first notification that the parent should recheck and retreat if necessary.
- F. If observation of nits or live lice continues with that family, the principal and/or teacher should review treatment options and provide 1% Premethrin shampoo recommended by AAP (see below).

HOME TREATMENT

- A. Shampoos
 - 1. Permethrin 1% (Recommended by AAP). Apply per package directions (may need to be reapplied 7-10 days later).
- B. Remove all nits from hair with a nit comb or by picking them out one at a time.
- C. Wash all clothes and bed linen in hot water, then dry on a hot cycle for 20 minutes.
- D. Dry clean items that cannot be washed or seal in a plastic bag for 2 weeks.
- E. Everyday cleaning methods are sufficient, there is no need for special chemical treatment (Pesticide Research Institute)
- F. Boil combs, brushes, hair bands and barrettes for 5 minutes.
- G. Check all members of the family and treat as needed.

Some children may develop a resistant strain of head lice and require a more concentrated effort from a physician.

Since lice cannot live on family pets, pets should not be treated.

PREVENTION

- A. The use of combs, brushes or other grooming aids belonging to other persons should be discouraged.
- B. Individuals should not share caps, other headwear or clothing, especially coats or sweaters.
- C. Parents should be encouraged to examine their children's hair periodically for nits.
- D. Cloakroom hooks should be individually assigned and spaced so clothing does not touch. If this is not feasible, outerwear can be placed in plastic or paper bags and hung on hooks. Gym lockers or numbered hooks should be assigned to individual students.