

Head Lice (Pediculosis) Procedure

Purpose

To contain infestation of head lice among the school age population while maximizing students' academic performance and minimizing absences due to exclusion of students. The American Academy of Pediatrics and the National Association of School Nurses no longer endorse a "No Nits" policy in schools. Exclusion is not an effective method in reducing lice outbreaks therefore head lice should not be a reason for an otherwise healthy child to be excluded from or kept absent from school. (Pediatrics 2010)

Procedure

1. Students with suspected cases of lice will be referred to the building administrator, school nurse, or designee for assessment. Students found with live lice will be excluded from school.
2. The Parent/guardian will be provided with information on head lice, methods to eliminate infestation, and directions to examine household contacts for lice and nits.
3. Students excluded from school will be readmitted after assessment by designated personnel to confirm no live lice are present. Students found with nits (lice eggs) only or returning after exclusion with the presence of nits only will not be excluded, but will be subject to periodic checks to confirm continuing absence of live lice.
4. Staff will maintain the privacy of students identified as being infected with head lice.

Head lice screening programs have not been shown to be cost effective or to significantly decrease the incidence of head lice in the school setting.

Note: The most common means of transmission is through physical/direct (head to head) contact. Indirect transmission is uncommon but may occur from shared combs, brushes, hats, and hair accessories that have been in contact with an infested person. Presence of nits does not indicate active infestation and no evidence is found that presence of nits correlates with any disease process (Scott, Gilmer, Johannessen, 2004). Other studies show that lice are not highly transferable in the school setting (Hootman, 2002) and no outbreaks of lice resulted when allowing children with nits to remain in class (Scott, Gilmer & Johannessen, 2004)

