

TO: Parents of Students in the North Kingstown School District
FROM: School Nurse Teachers
SUBJECT: Head Lice in the School Setting

Head lice, a very common problem in the school and day care setting, are tiny, wingless bloodsucking insects that feed on the human scalp. They are about the size of a sesame seed, crawl and are found concentrated at the back of the neck and behind the ears. They lay white eggs that are attached to the hair strand, usually within an inch of the scalp. Head lice are a problem every year, but increased cases are found in the autumn and spring.

The following is an overview of our policy:

1. Routine head lice check are done as needed.
2. If a case of head lice develops in your classroom, the student's parent/guardian will be notified by phone as well as letter that prompt, proper treatment of this condition is in the best interest of the child and his or her classmates. The student will remain in the classroom but be discouraged from close direct head contact with others. The parent/guardian will be encouraged to treat the child, including removal of nits, before returning to school the next day. This includes shampooing with a lice killing product and removal of nits (eggs) with a fine tooth comb. All children in the classroom will be checked for head lice if a case is found and subsequent notification will be sent home.
3. Students need not be excluded from school for the presence of nits or live lice.
4. If multiple cases are detected in the classroom, parents will be notified and advised to do regular head checks. The School Nurse Teacher will continue to monitor the classroom for cases of lice until the problem is resolved.

DO NOT:

Treat your child for head lice unnecessarily! These products do not prevent your child from getting head lice.

DO:

1. Educate your child not to share combs, hats or hair accessories.
2. Keep coats and hats separate from others to avoid lice transmission.
3. Check all other family members to avoid an infestation of head lice in the home.

If your child becomes infected with head lice:

1. Kill the lice with lice killing shampoo available at a pharmacy. This will kill the lice but not the eggs. Another treatment is required after seven days. Check with your doctor or pharmacist.
2. Remove the nits. This is the most difficult part but the only way to be sure the eggs are removed. Only a fine nit comb can be used to remove all the eggs, so that your child is not re-infested in 7-12 days.
3. Clean the house and check other family members. It is not necessary to treat pets.
4. Wash headgear, pillow cases and towels in hot water and hot machine drying. Combs and hairbrushes can be soaked in very hot water for 5 minutes. Dry clean clothing or store contaminated items (stuffed toys) in well-sealed plastic bags for 10 days is also effective. Vacuuming is a safe and effective alternative to insecticide spray. Vacuum furniture, cars and rugs, etc...

Please do not hesitate to ask questions. Contact the school clinic for any questions or concerns.