

**NORTH COLONIE CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
91 FIDDLERS LANE
LATHAM, NY 12110**

December 21, 2015

**NOTIFICATION OF A COMMUNICABLE DISEASE
HEAD LICE**

This is to inform you that we have had one or more cases of head lice at Shaker High School. This is a very contagious condition and can spread rapidly. The main sign to watch for is excessive itching at the back of the neck or head.

Head lice start with nits which are small white eggs that attach themselves to the hair close to the scalp and especially behind the ears. Nits are different from dandruff in that they cannot be easily removed. Nits will hatch out in about a week if not properly removed. Head lice are spread through personal contact with an infested person, hats, and/or brushes and cannot cause your child(ren) any serious trouble, but they are unpleasant to the child. We are taking precautions at Shaker High School to prevent any spread of this. If your child is found to have head lice, please contact the Health Office as soon as possible.

If there is any bleeding or there are open sores on the scalp from scratching, take your child to the doctor before any home treatment is given.

There are several highly effective preparations available in drug stores that are for treating head lice. **CAREFULLY FOLLOW THE DIRECTIONS ON THE BOX.**

Sincerely,

Richard W. Murphy
Principal

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Att.

PLEASE SEE ATTACHED DOCUMENTS FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Attached, you will find information regarding head lice as published by the New York State Department of health. In addition, below you will find additional information about checking your child for head lice as well as detailed treatment information if your child does have a head lice infestation. Please be sure to read this document carefully. Importantly, immediately upon returning to school after a confirmed case of head lice, your child should report directly to the nurses' office for a recheck. This recheck should be done before attending any classes.

Do not treat your child for head lice or the environment unless you see nits (eggs) or head lice.

What to look for:

- Adult lice are small (about the size of a sesame seed).
- Eggs (nits) are usually found firmly attached to the base of the hair shaft.
- Lice stay near the scalp, often behind the ears, near the neckline, and back of the head.
- Head lice hold tightly to the hair. They move by crawling. They cannot hop or fly (they do not have wings), but do move quickly making it difficult to find in a child's hair.
- Signs of a head lice infestation include: itchy scalp, tickling sensation in a person's hair. Head lice are most active in the dark.

Do not treat your child for head lice or the environment unless you see nits (eggs) or head lice.

If your child is found to have head lice, it is important to treat your child before he/she returns to school. Please begin treatment as soon as possible. Exclude your child from attendance at school or day care until one day after their first treatment with a medicated head lice product (either over-the-counter or prescription). Your prompt action is requested so that your child can get back to school as soon as possible and not miss learning opportunities in the classroom.

Tips for prescription or over-the-counter head lice treatment:

- Whether using an over-the-counter head lice product or a prescribed treatment, it is very important that you read and follow all directions on the product's label.
- Do not treat someone who does not have live lice (or nits close to the head). Do not use these products as a prevention method to avoid lice.
- Do not use a cream rinse, combination shampoo/conditioner, or conditioner on the hair before using the lice medicine.
- It is recommended that both the person getting treated and the person administering the treatment put on clean clothing after the treatment is completed.
- Be cautious not to use more than one head lice medication at time.
- 8-12 hours after treatment, examine your child's head again. If you see a few lice still around, but they are moving more slowly than before, do not re-treat. Comb the dead lice and any remaining live lice out of the hair using a fine-toothed nit/lice comb.
- To comb through the hair, sit in a well lighted area. Part the hair into small sections and comb through one section at a time. Be patient and thorough, it can take a lot of time.
- 8-12 hours after treatment, if no dead lice are found and lice appear to be as active as before, the medicine may not be working. Do not re-treat until speaking with your health care provider. Your health care provider may recommend using a different lice medicine.

- Re-treatment is generally recommended for most lice medicines after 7-10 days. This should kill any newly hatched lice before they produce new eggs. Be sure to follow the instructions for the product you are using.
- It is important to check the hair and comb through it with a nit comb every 2-3 days. This will help to remove nits and lice and can decrease the chance of self re-infestation. Do this for 2-3 weeks to be sure all lice and nits are gone.
- Wash combs, brushes, hats and other hair accessories of the affected person in hot water.

Tips for combing out head lice and nits:

- Use a fine-toothed louse or nit comb. These combs may be included within packages of medicated head lice treatment or you may buy one from most drug stores or pet supply stores. Combs with metal teeth spaced close together seem to work best.
- Sit behind your child, and use a bright light (and magnification if needed), to inspect and comb through the hair, one small section at a time.
- Repeat combing until no more active lice are observed.
- Comb daily until no live lice are discovered for two weeks. It may take several hours each night for several nights to tackle the problem. An entertaining video may help keep the child occupied during this time.
- Adult female lice cement eggs to the base of a hair shaft near the skin. As the hair grows, eggs are moved away from the scalp. Eggs more than ¼ inch from the scalp are nearly always hatched and do not mean live lice are present.
- Combs, brushes, hats and other hair accessories in contact with an infested person should be washed in hot water each day to dislodge any lice or nits.
- Combing is sometimes painful to the child or it may be impractical for other reasons. In these cases, consider using anti-lice products. Speak with the school nurse or your child's doctor for advice.

Treatment of clothes and other items:

- A clothes dryer set at high heat or a hot pressing iron will kill lice or their eggs on pillowcases, sheets, nightclothes, towels and similar items your child has been in contact with during the previous two days. (Lice and their eggs do not live more than one to two days off the head.)
- Lice and their eggs on objects (such as toys) may be killed by freezing temperatures. Objects that cannot be put in a clothes dryer can be placed in a freezer (or outdoors if sufficiently cold) for several days. This treatment is rarely required.

Cleaning the house and car:

- Once lice fall off of the head, they usually die within a day and eggs generally cannot live much longer. Thoroughly vacuuming the house and furniture is all that is really necessary for cleaning the home. A major cleaning effort will do little to further eliminate head lice.
- Insecticide treatments for the home, vehicles, or carpets and furniture are not needed and unnecessarily expose family members to the insecticides.

Pediculosis

(lice, head lice, body lice, pubic lice, cooties, crabs)

What is pediculosis?

Pediculosis is an infestation of the hairy parts of the body or clothing with the eggs, larvae or adults of lice. The crawling stages of this insect feed on human blood, which can result in severe itching. Head lice are usually located on the scalp, crab lice in the pubic area and body lice along seams of clothing. Body lice travel to the skin to feed and return back to the clothing.

Who gets pediculosis?

Anyone may become louse infested under suitable conditions of exposure. Pediculosis is easily transmitted from person-to-person during direct contact. Head lice infestations are frequently found in school settings or institutions. Crab lice infestations can be found among sexually active individuals. Body lice infestation can be found in people living in crowded, unsanitary conditions where clothing is infrequently changed or laundered.

How is pediculosis spread?

For both head lice and body lice, transmission can occur during direct contact with an infested individual. Sharing of clothing and combs or brushes may also result in transmission of these insects. While other means are possible, crab lice are most often transmitted through sexual contact.

What are the symptoms of pediculosis?

Usually, the first indication of an infestation is the itching or scratching in the area of the body where the lice feed. Scratching at the back of the head or around the ears should lead to an examination for head louse eggs (nits) on the hair. Itching around the genital area should lead to an examination for crab lice or their eggs. Scratching can be sufficiently intense to result in secondary bacterial infection in these areas.

How soon do symptoms appear?

It may take as long as two to three weeks or longer for a person to notice the intense itching associated with this infestation.

For how long is a person able to spread pediculosis?

Pediculosis can be spread as long as lice or eggs remain alive on the infested person or clothing.

What is the treatment for pediculosis?

Medicated shampoos or cream rinses containing pyrethrins or permethrin are preferred for treating people with head lice. Products containing pyrethrins, permethrin or malathion are available over-the-counter, but those containing lindane or malathion are available only through a physician's prescription. Lindane-based shampoos are not recommended for infants, young children, pregnant women, lactating women, the elderly, persons with HIV or seizure disorders, persons who have very irritated skin or sores where the lidane will be applied and persons who weigh less than 110 pounds. Retreatment after 7 to 10 days is often recommended to ensure that no eggs have survived. Nit combs are available to help remove nits from hair. Dose and duration of shampoo treatment should be followed carefully according to label instructions.

What can be done to prevent the spread of pediculosis?

Physical contact with infested individuals and their belongings, especially clothing, headgear and bedding, should be avoided. Health education on the life history of lice, proper treatment and the importance of laundering clothing and bedding in hot water or dry cleaning to destroy lice and eggs is extremely valuable. In addition, regular direct inspection of children for head lice, and when indicated, of body and clothing, particularly of children in schools, institutions, nursing homes and summer camps, is important.