



## Notes from the School Nurses

### Head lice

Head lice are small wingless insects that live on a person's head. The adult louse is about the size of a sesame seed tan/gray in color. The female lives 3-4 weeks and can lay up to 10 eggs per day. The tiny eggs (nits) are attached  $\frac{1}{4}$  from the base of the hair shaft usually at the back of the head and behind the ears. It takes 7-12 days for the nits to hatch. The nits may be camouflaged the color of the hair or white once the louse has hatched.

- Lice are not a health hazard or a sign of poor hygiene. Nor do they transmit disease.
- Lice only crawl, they do not fly or jump.
- Lice are most often shared by head to head contact, rarely through combs, hats or headbands.

#### Treatment

- Wash hair with a lice shampoo, like Nix. Repeat 7-10 days later if live lice are seen. The shampoo only kills live lice. They do not harm the eggs. May repeat in 7 days if live lice are seen. Do not use more often than every 7-10 days.
- Comb hair daily for 14 days with metal nit comb. Start with a very small section of hair and starting at the scalp. (THIS IS THE MOST IMPORTANT STEP)
- Remove every egg (nit) and louse that you see, dispose of them in the garbage or flush in drain/toilet.

#### Cleaning

- Wash bedding, hats, coats, towels in hot water and or put in drier on high heat.
- Clean brushes and combs in hot soapy water, soak for 10 minutes

#### Other things to consider

- Be sure to check everyone else living in the household and treat if lice/nits are found
- Notify the parents of your child's friends that your child has lice
- Your child will not be excluded from school
- Check your child's hair weekly for any signs of lice
- If your child has hair long enough consider putting it up in a ponytail or a braid

