



**OFFICE OF STUDENT HEALTH SERVICES
TREATMENT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HEAD LICE**

GENERAL

Head lice are most common among children and their household members. Head lice affect all social and economic groups and are not influenced by hair length or frequency of brushing or shampooing. Although head lice can be a nuisance, they do not transmit disease or pose any health hazards.

Head lice are very small insects that live in human hair where they feed on tiny amounts of human blood. They usually survive less than 1 day away from the scalp. Lice do not hop or jump; they can only crawl. They do not live on pets. In most cases, head lice are spread by direct head-to-head contact with a person who already has head lice. Spread by indirect contact with shared objects such as combs, brushes, hats, or other personal items may also occur, but is less likely.

Indications of head lice may include the tickling feeling of something moving in the hair, itching, or having sores on the head caused by scratching.

Head lice can be treated at home with over-the-counter medications.

INSPECTION:

- Check all household members for head lice. Start by looking at the back of the neck, behind the ears and then move to the top of the head. Look carefully at each section of the entire head. Bright light or natural daylight and magnified reading glasses might help you see the lice and nits. The presence of live, crawling head lice is called an infestation, and has most likely been present for over two weeks.
- Head lice are hard to see because they are very small (about the size of a sesame seed), avoid light, and move quickly.
- It is easier to see the eggs (called nits), which resemble dandruff. Nits are tiny yellowish-white oval eggs that are firmly attached to the hair close to the scalp. In general, eggs found more than ¼ inch from the scalp are not likely to survive.



TREATMENT:

The current recommended first line treatment for head lice is using an FDA-approved over-the-counter product containing permethrin 1% or pyrethrins. Only treat household members who have live lice. Treat individuals all at the same time. Commonly used treatments are NIX® and RID®. These products kill live lice, but do not kill eggs. *Chesterfield County Public Schools does not endorse a specific treatment. Parent/guardian consultation with a licensed healthcare provider or pharmacist is encouraged to discuss all treatment options available for the treatment of lice.* Resistance to some over-the-counter products can occur. It is important to properly use the product as directed on the packaging and to use the same product throughout the treatment cycle.

NOTE: Lice treatment products should NOT be used on pregnant women, nursing mothers, children under the age of 2, or persons who are immune-compromised, unless directed to do so by their healthcare provider.

Process for Applying Treatment:

1. Keep all medication out of the eyes.
2. Have the infested person put on clothing that can be removed without pulling it over the head after treatment.

READ AND CAREFULLY FOLLOW ALL THE INSTRUCTIONS ON THE PACKAGE FOR EFFECTIVE TREATMENT.

| RID® Shampoo Pyrethrins (pie-WREATH-rins) | NIX® Cream Rinse Permethrin (per-meth-rin) |
|---|--|
| <i>Do not wash hair</i> | <i>Wash hair without conditioners</i> |
| <i>Use on dry hair</i> | <i>Use on damp hair towel dried</i> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use entire bottle per person completely saturating hair and scalp. ● Leave on hair 10 minutes. ● Rinse hair with warm water. ● Do not use shampoo, conditioner or other hair products for <u>1-2 days</u> after treatment. ● Re-treat with the same product in 7-10 days. Day 9 is optimal. | |

3. Remove clothing after treatment and wash immediately in hot water and dry for at least 20 minutes in a dryer on the hot cycle.
4. Comb wet hair after treatment and remove nits (especially the ones close to the scalp). Combs with metal teeth and spaces close together work best. Continue to remove any nits with **daily** combing for the next 7 days.

General guidelines for combing:

- Check the hair a small section at a time under a bright light or lamp that can be directed at the area. Using a magnifying glass makes the nits easier to find.
- Hold the comb with the flat side resting in your fingertips with teeth facing you.
- Lift a small strand of hair (about ¼” thick). Gently push the teeth as close to the hair roots as possible and drag comb firmly from the roots to the ends of the hair. Always comb

away from the head. Wipe eggs and nits from the teeth of the comb with a tissue or paper towel.

- Continue to comb hair ¼” at a time until entire head has been combed and pinned.
 - Continue to check all treated persons for two-three weeks to be certain all lice and nits are gone. As the hair grows, eggs embedded in the scalp will grow out and need to be removed.
5. Re-apply the same treatment product at Day 9 in order to kill the next cycle of lice born from the remaining eggs not killed at the first treatment.
 6. If head lice are still present after the second treatment, do not use the same medication again. Contact your healthcare provider for additional treatment options.

HOUSEHOLD CLEANING

It is important to clean the home and car on the same day as treatment.

Laundry:

- Machine wash all items the infested household member has been in contact with in the past two days such as towels, pillowcases, sheets, pajamas, clothes, coats, hats and similar items in very hot (at least 130^o F) water. Dry for at least 20 minutes in a dryer on the high heat cycle.
- Stuffed animals and pillows should be washed or placed in a large plastic bag and kept sealed in the bag for 14 days.

Hair items:

- Soak hair items (combs, brushes, hair ribbons, barrettes) in hot soapy water (at least 130^o F) for a minimum of 10 minutes.

Vacuum:

- Vacuum the floor and furniture, focusing where the infested person had contact.
- Vacuum cars and especially car seats.
- Dispose of the vacuum cleaner bag contents when finished.

IMPORTANT: Spraying or fogging a home with insecticides is NOT recommended. They can be harmful if inhaled or absorbed through the skin.

READMISSION TO SCHOOL

Your child may return to school after the first treatment.

After treating, bring your child to the school clinic to be rechecked by the school nurse or clinic assistant prior to returning to the classroom. Complete the enclosed *Head Lice Treatment Verification Form*. Bring this form back to school with your child.

School exclusion is not recommended for students with lice and/or nits. Research indicates there is low risk of transmission in classrooms. Routine classroom or school-wide screening is discouraged.

References:

American Academy of Pediatrics, PEDIATRICS Volume 135, number 5, May 2015

<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/135/5/e1355.full>

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CDC Parasites Head Lice Treatment. Retrieved March 28, 2017, from <https://www.cdc.gov/parasites/lice/head/treatment.html>

NASN Lice Management in the School Setting - Pediculosis Position Statement January, 2016
<https://www.nasn.org/PolicyAdvocacy/PositionPapersandReports/NASNPositionStatementsFullView/tabid/462/ArticleId/934/Head-Lice-Management-in-the-School-Setting-Revised-2016>

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