

## NOTIFICATION OF LICE

There are three forms of lice, the nit (egg), the nymph, and the adult. Nits are found firmly attached to the hair shaft fairly close to the scalp and are white-yellow in color and oval shaped. They make look like dandruff, but are hard to remove. They take 1 week to hatch. Nymphs are a baby louse and mature into adults in about 7 days. They feed on blood. The adult is about the size of a sesame seed and is grayish-white. They can live up to 30 days and feed on blood.

Incubation period: (the time between exposure to the disease and the appearance of symptoms) 7-14 days.

Contagious period: (when the disease can be transmitted to another person) as long as the lice or eggs/nits are present.

Signs and symptoms: The lice cause severe itching usually on the back of the head by biting the scalp to feed. The itching is caused by an allergic reaction to the bite of the louse. Your child may have a tickling of something moving in the hair, sores on the head are caused by scratching and irritability.

Treatment: Contact your physician or pharmacist for assistance in obtaining a shampoo that is specific for head lice. Follow the instructions carefully. After shampooing with a pediculocide (lice killing) shampoo, you must be sure to remove ALL the nits with either a fine-toothed comb or with your fingers. If any nits remain, they can hatch and your child can be reinfested.

How this disease is spread: Head lice are spread from one person to another by contact with lice-infested items, such as hats, hairbrushes, combs, towels and bedding.

Control of cases: Notify your school. Head lice MUST be treated with a special shampoo and all the nits MUST be removed. Wash all personal items such as hats, bedding, towels, combs, etc. in hot water and soap. If the articles cannot be washed, they should be dry cleaned. Vacuum furniture, upholstery, carpeting, mattresses and pillows. Anything that cannot be cleaned, like stuffed animals should be put in a plastic bag and secured for two weeks.

General prevention measures: Encourage your child to wash his/her hands frequently, advise them not to share hats, combs, brushes, hair ribbons or pillows, to wash their combs and brushes regularly, and to report any itching.

Your child WILL NOT be allowed to return to school if there are any nits present in the hair.