

Head Lice

Head lice are very small insects that live only on human hair. They are considered a “nuisance disease” meaning they do not cause illness or death. However, because they can easily transfer from person to person on hats, combs, barrettes, etc., head lice are termed a “communicable disease” by the Oregon Department of Health.

All students diagnosed with a school restrictable disease will be immediately excluded from school. Any student diagnosed with having head lice will also be sent home immediately.

The family will be provided with information regarding Board policy and the treatment of the student, family members, other contacts and the home environment. The family may take the student to their family physician or the Curry County Health Department for a prescription or the family may decide to purchase a pediculicide (a special shampoo for head lice) at the pharmacy. The County Health Officer recommends prescription shampoos such as Nix or Kwell.

The student, other family members and close contacts, must be treated at the same time with the proper shampoo carefully following the manufacturer’s recommended guidelines. The shampoo treatment must be repeated in seven days. After treatment, the eggs (nits) must be removed either with a fine tooth comb or by manually pulling them from the hair strands.

The student may not return to school until treated with a proper shampoo. The student will be readmitted to school the day after the first shampoo if the district nurse feels the student has received adequate treatment.

Adequate treatment will be determined by:

1. A note from the student’s parent, physician or other health-care provider, stating that the student’s head was shampooed with an acceptable source of treatment;
2. A label or the shampoo bottle brought in as proof of treatment; or
3. After proper treatment, the student is nit free upon returning to school.

Completion of treatment:

1. On the fifth to seventh day following the first shampoo the district nurse will inspect the student’s hair;
2. If nit free, the student may stay in school but will be reminded to shampoo the second time;

3. If nits are present, the student will be sent home advising the parent that the nits must be removed before readmission;
4. Second shampoo must be done on day seven.

Students experiencing repeated problems with head lice may be referred to the Curry County Health Department for follow-up.

The Control of Head Lice

The first step in the control of head lice in your family is the proper use of the medication. Follow physician instructions (prescription products) or the directions on the package (over-the-counter products) carefully in the use of the medication.

Along with proper use of the medication, household and personal items should be cleaned in order to assure complete elimination of the infestation. Items that should be cleaned and cleaning methods that should be used follow.

The cleaning should take place at the same time treatment is started.

I. Household Items - (only those items used within the past three to four days)

- a. Linens - (sheets, pillowcases, bath towels, washcloths)
 - (1) Wash items in hottest cycle of the washer with usual detergent.
- b. Blankets, comforters and bedspreads
 - (1) Wash items in the hottest cycle of the washer with usual detergent; or
 - (2) Place items in the clothes dryer for 20 minutes on the hottest cycle; or
 - (3) Dry clean items; or
 - (4) Place the item in a plastic bag and seal for 10 days.
- c. Stuffed animals
 - (1) Wash items in the hottest cycle of the washer with usual detergent; or
 - (2) Place items in the clothes dryer for 20 minutes on the hottest cycle; or
 - (3) Place items in a plastic bag and seal for 10 days.
- d. Upholstered furniture, carpet and mattress
 - (1) Vacuum items very well;
 - (2) Spray with aerosol insecticide spray.
- e. Floors, counters, sinks and tubs
 - (1) Wash with hot soapy water and a solution that contains 70 percent alcohol.

2. **Personal Items** - (only those items used recently)

a. Clothing (shirts, sweaters, coats, jackets, etc.)

- (1) Wash items in the hottest cycle of the washer with usual detergent; or
- (2) Place items in the clothes dryer for 20 minutes on the hottest cycle; or
- (3) Dry clean items; or
- (4) Place the items in a plastic bag and seal for 10 days.

b. Hats, scarfs, caps and headbands

- (1) Wash items in the hottest cycle of the washer with usual detergent; or
- (2) Place items in the clothes dryer for 20 minutes on the hottest cycle; or
- (3) Dry clean items; or
- (4) Place the items in a plastic bag and seal for 10 days.

c. Combs, brushes, barrettes and curlers

- (1) Soak the items in a pan of very hot water for 10 minutes. (The water should be heated on the stove to 150° Fahrenheit).

3. **Follow-Up Activities - Very Important**

a. In 7-10 days recheck for signs of a recurrent lice problem. Reshampoo at that time.

b. Inform the school and/or day care of a lice problem so other students can be diagnosed.

For further information contact your family physician or the Curry County Health Department.