



ERIE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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HEAD LICE - SCHOOL GUIDANCE

Managing head lice can be a challenge for any school. School nurses are often vital to provide information to students, parents, teachers and administration. These tips on identifying, managing, and preventing head lice will help you to respond if lice appear in your school.

If you think you have spotted lice?

- Discretely remove the student from class
- Do not exclude student from class or send them home
- Thoroughly check students' hair/scalp for lice

How to check for lice?

- Part students' hair in brightly-lit room
- Look for crawling lice and nits on scalp one section at a time
- Fine tooth louse comb can aid in detection

Have a positive head lice ID?

- Oversee case until problem is resolved
- Isolate child's belongings from others'
- Screen known close contacts
- Tell student's parents about sighting
- Provide student and parents with information about treatment

What to tell parents?

- Lice do not spread disease
- Having lice does not mean their home isn't clean
- It is not necessary for school to close or exclude student from class
- Notify parents by phone
- Provide educational materials for treatment
- Encourage routine head checks at home

Successful lice management?

- Routine head checks
- Treatment after positive identification
- Discourage head to head contact (sports, playgrounds, hugging)
- Prevent sharing of hair accessories and other items that touch head
- Wear hair in ponytail (if possible)
- Vacuum classroom, however head lice only live 1-2 days after falling off head



Guidance on "no-nit" policies

General practices that can prevent head lice:

- No-nit policies are not recommended by CDC or AAP
- Nits are unlikely to be transferred to other people
- Nits often misdiagnosed

Finding head lice on a student or their belongings does not mean their home or school is infested.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
Erie County Health Department
Office of Epidemiology and Surveillance
(419) 626-5623

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention www.cdc.gov
US Environmental Protection Agency www.epa.gov

* Adapted from the following websites: CDC, EPA