

## WORCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS DEPARTMENT OF NURSING

### NOTICE AND INSTRUCTIONS FOR PARENTS

We have discovered lice in your child's classroom. Head lice affects more people than all other childhood communicable diseases, not including the common cold. But, like a cold, when children come in close contact with each other, it is easy to pass head lice along. Shared hats, clothing, brushes, pillows and other personal articles are perfect vehicles to transfer lice from one person to another. It is important to act immediately to prevent their spread to other classmates and to your family as well.

Head lice are small, only about 1/16 of an inch long. They are grayish-white with dark edges. **While they cannot fly and do not jump, they move quickly.** That is why it is difficult to find them in a child's hair.

Diagnosis of head lice is generally made when lice eggs (called nits), which are fastened to the hair shaft, are clearly evident. Nits are teardrop shaped and also very small, only about 1/32 of an inch long. They are "glued" to the hair and cannot be washed or brushed out like dandruff. Clusters of nits may be found in any section of the hair, but they are more apt to be behind the ears and at the nape of the neck.

Getting rid of head lice and nits need not be difficult. It is a matter of washing the hair with a lice-killing product; and then very carefully, with a fine comb, removing all of the nits. Removal of these nits is important to avoid re-infestation.

#### When your child comes home with head lice...

Do not panic. Anyone can get head lice. It has nothing to do with cleanliness, nor does it reflect on you as a parent. The problem is easily eliminated. Simply follow these instructions.

1. **Examine your child's head** to be sure that you know what the nits look like. They are tiny, grayish-white eggs attached to the hair, near the scalp, especially behind the ears and at the nape of the neck.
2. **Check all other family members** to see if they are infested. Any family member with evidence of head lice must be treated.
3. **Use an effective head lice treatment.** Your pharmacist can recommend an effective pediculicide product. When used as directed, it will be very effective in killing head lice.
4. **Remove nits (lice eggs).** Because pediculicide products do not remove the eggs, it is very important to remove all traces of the nits to prevent re-infestation. A special comb for this task is usually provided with the lice treatment product.
5. **Wash all clothes, bed linens and towels** in hot water and dry them on a hot cycle for at least 20 minutes. Items that cannot be safely washed, such as stuffed animals, should be dry cleaned or stored outside the home for a minimum of two weeks.

6. **Clean combs and brushes in hot, soapy water.** Water should be at least 130 F, and it is advisable to let combs and brushes soak in the hot water for 10 minutes.
7. **Vacuum everywhere** to make sure your home is free of lice. Vacuum carpets, pillows, mattresses, car seats, and upholstered furniture: anything that might hold lice. Do a thorough job and discard the vacuum bag promptly.
8. Head lice **survive only on humans**; they do not affect family pets. To eliminate head lice and nits from your home, follow the directions above. Doing a thorough job will prevent their spread to others.

The Worcester Public Schools is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer/Educational Institution and does not discriminate regardless of race, color, gender, age, religion, national origin, gender identity, marital status, sexual orientation, disability or homelessness. The Worcester Public Schools provides equal access to employment and the full range of general, occupational and vocational education programs. For more information relating to Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action contact the Human Resource Manager, 20 Irving Street, Worcester, MA 01609, 508-799-3020.

**WORCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
DEPARTMENT OF NURSING**

**NOTICE AND INSTRUCTIONS FOR PARENTS**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

We have discovered that your child: \_\_\_\_\_, has evidence of head lice; a problem that is easily treated.

Head lice affects more people than all other childhood communicable diseases, not including the common cold. But, like a cold, when children come in close contact with each other, it is easy to pass head lice along. Shared hats, clothing, brushes, pillows and other personal articles are perfect vehicles to transfer lice from one person to another. It is important to act immediately to prevent their spread to other classmates and to your family as well.

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Clusters of nits may be found in any section of the hair, but they are more apt to be behind the ears and at the nape (back) of the neck.

Getting rid of head lice and nits need not be difficult. It is a matter of washing the hair with a lice-killing product; and then very carefully, with a fine comb, removing all of the nits. Removal of these nits is important to avoid re-infestation.

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Your child may not be readmitted to school until:

1. Medicated shampoo has been used.
2. All live lice have been removed from the hair.

The student must be accompanied by a parent and examined by the school nurse before returning to class.

The nurse will be in the office at: \_\_\_\_\_

School Nurse: \_\_\_\_\_

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