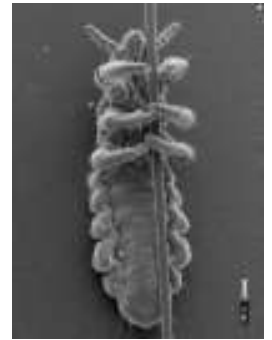


# Head Lice for Schools



*Teays Valley Local School District*

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## **Objectives: After this presentation, school staff will:**

- Identify at least 3 facts about head lice
- Describe management of possible head lice infestation in the classroom according to Teays Valley SD Policy

# Head Lice: Historical Perspective

- Lice have been our companions since ancient times & have so befriended us, they can't live without us.
- Lice likely co-evolved with people; claws are well adapted to grasping the hair shaft.
- Lice don't jump or fly.
- Lice are host specific parasites so human lice don't live on other animals.
- Lice must feed off scalp, so they die within 24 hours of separation from human hosts; if they have fallen off hair, they are at the end of the life cycle.

# Head Lice: What are They?

- A head louse is an insect that lives on the human scalp and feeds on blood.
- Head lice hatch from small eggs (nits) that are attached with a cement-like substance to the shaft of individual hairs.
- Eggs hatch in about 10 days. Once hatched, the head louse matures in less than 2 weeks.
- Female head lice may survive for as much as a month (most seem to perish sooner). Those more than about 2 weeks old increasingly become geriatric and tend to produce fewer eggs and less viable eggs.
- If nits are present, head lice have already been there—but may be long gone.

# Head Lice: What are they (cont'd)?

- Rarely more than 12 live lice on head at one time.
- Most head louse infestations seem to cause little, if any, direct harm.
- Head lice are not known to naturally transmit microbes that cause disease.
- The greatest harm associated with head lice results from the well-intentioned but misguided use of caustic or toxic substances to eliminate the lice.
- Traditional pediculicides and alternative formulations or methods are frequently over-applied.

# Head Lice: How do we get them?

- **The most common means of transmission is through physical/direct (head to head) contact!!**
- Indirect transmission is uncommon but may occur via *shared* combs, brushes, hats, and hair accessories that have been in contact with an infested person.
- Rarely, through *shared* helmets – don't live on helmets alone.
- Schools are **not** a common source of transmission.

# Harvard Scheme for Managing Presumed Head Louse Infestations in Schools

Nits Discovered on hair?

Yes    No                      Do nothing



Inspect hair for live lice;

May send sample to health services (school nurse)

Resinspect in 7-10 school days



# Harvard Scheme for Managing Presumed Head Louse Infestations in Schools 2

Live (crawling) lice on hair?

Yes

No

Reinspect in 7-10 days



- Notify parent/guardian **at the end of the day; recommend that they call their physician for recommendations to treat head lice**
- Provide information on head lice and methods to eliminate infestation

# Harvard Scheme for Managing Presumed Head Louse Infestations in Schools

## UNJUSTIFIED RESPONSES TO LIVE LICE

- **Exclusion or quarantine**
- **Notification of classmates parents**
- **Classroom or schoolwide screenings**
- **Insecticide treatments to the school environment**
- **Bagging of clothes, toys, etc.**
- **Vacuuming; boiling linens; laundering *all* linens**
- **Restricting use of headphones, equipment (helmets)**
- **Reporting to Child Protective Services in absence of other indicators**

# What staff need to know in response

- **Creating unnecessary panic in the school community is a disservice to students.**
- **We need to *educate* students, families, and ourselves based on fact and not fear.**
- **Don't let head lice interfere with students' opportunities to learn and achieve *in the classroom*. Missing school puts a child at risk for failure.**

# TVSD POLICY

- To better manage and to limit the spread of head lice infestations, school employees shall report all suspected cases of head lice to the school nurse or designee (*trained by the nurse*). The school nurse or designee shall examine the student. An infestation shall be determined by looking closely through the hair and scalp for viable nits or live lice.
- If nits are found but there are no live (crawling) lice on the hair, the school nurse or designee shall reinspect within 7-10 school days.

# TVSD POLICY cont'd



- If live (crawling) lice are found on the hair, the parent/guardian shall be notified by the end of the day via phone, email, and/or a note sent home with the student. The parent/guardian shall be provided information on the biology of head lice, methods to eliminate infestation, and directions to examine household contacts for lice and nits. The school nurse or designee *may* notify parents/guardians of students ***who have had head to head contact in the affected classroom*** to encourage them to check their children and to treat, if appropriate, and/or examine other students most likely to have had direct head to head contact with the affected student. (Parents/guardians should be referred to the pediatrician for follow up)

# TVSD POLICY

## cont'd

- **Parents/guardians will be encouraged to verify treatment as soon as possible after notification.**
- ***If the parent/guardian is unable to afford treatment, the student will be referred to the Health Department at 477-9667 ext. 240.***
- **Students shall be discouraged from direct head to head contact with other students. The nurse or designee shall provide in-service education to staff regarding how to handle nits and/or head lice in the classroom.**
- **Information about head lice shall be sent home to all parents/guardians at the beginning of the school year.**
- **Staff shall maintain the privacy of students identified as having head lice.**

# Verifying infestation



Pseudo nit

- Even if an experienced person checks for lice, they may be misdiagnosed.
- To reduce anxiety as we educate, feel free to submit suspected nits or lice for testing.
- Affix to white paper using one piece of tape.
- Refer to the School Nurse for follow up of suspicion.

# Resources

- NASN pediculosis position statement  
<http://www.nasn.org/Default.aspx?tabid=237>
- AAP policy on head lice  
<http://aappolicy.aappublications.org/cgi/content/full>
- Harvard School of Public Health  
<http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/headlice.html>