

******* Head Lice Can Happen to Anyone *******

Lice are tiny insects that live and breed in human hair. They do not hop, jump, or fly. They spread through direct head to head contact with an infested person or their belongings. Poor hygiene does not lead to infestation. In fact, lice like clean, healthy hair. Lice lay eggs (called nits) on the hair shafts, which hatch in 10 days, and mature into lice in about 2 weeks. Nits are small, whitish ovals attached to hair shafts (usually close to the scalp) and they cannot be brushed or blown away from the hair.

There are shampoos (ie Nit Rid, Lice Killing Shampoo that will kill live lice. After the shampooing you must deal with the tedious and frustrating task of nit picking. Nits need to be picked out by hand or using a special comb made for nits. Once done you must continue to check for nits daily over the three-week life cycle of the louse.

Finally, the home environment needs to be cleaned effectively by vacuuming carpets, mattresses, furniture, car upholstery, stuffed animals, etc. Next dry any clothing and bed linens in a hot dryer for 20 minutes prior to laundering again. Lice cannot live away from a human scalp for more than 36 hours; so after a once over cleaning, go back to concentrating on the heads.

In order to decrease the number of outbreaks, it is important to remember a few things.

- First, if you find a case of head lice, it is important to notify the school nurse and friends' parents. Remember, lice can happen to anyone and it is not a time for finger pointing and blaming.
- Secondly, educating yourself is one of the best defenses against this pesky problem.
- Third, educate your child to not share hairbrushes, hats, hair scrunchies, barrettes, scarves, coats, or pillows/stuffed animals. This is one of the primary means of lice migrating from one child to another.

Please feel free to call the school nurse if you have questions/concerns.