

# Head Lice

**What are Head Lice?** Head lice are tiny insects that live in human hair and feed on human blood. They multiply rapidly, laying little silvery-colored oval shaped eggs (nits) which they glue to the base of the hair, close to the scalp. They do not spread illnesses.

**How are lice transmitted?** Lice crawl; they do not fly or jump. They are transmitted through direct contact with an infected person or with shared items. Items that share lice include combs, brushes, bedding; hats, headphones and clothing. They are not a sign of uncleanliness—rather a sign of recent proximity to an infected person.

**How can you tell if your child has lice?** Since it can be hard to find the lice, you may just see the nits. In contrast to dandruff which can be flicked off the hair; nits cannot because they are glued to individual hairs. One telltale sign of head lice is persistent itching of the scalp (caused by the bite of the louse). Use a magnifying glass and natural light when searching for nits on the hair at the back of the neck, behind the ears and on top of the head.

**What can you do about lice?** Since lice prefer clean hair, consider shampooing every 2-3 days. Check your entire family for lice regularly, after sleepovers and when your child repeatedly scratches their scalp. There are shampoos and leave-in sprays that are thought to repel lice. Consider tying hair back in pony tails or braids. Children should not share headbands, hair ties, combs, brushes and hats.

**If you find lice,** don't panic! Consider using one of the many treatment shampoos available. Follow the package directions exactly. See CDC web site for detailed instructions. Pesticide free options include, LiceMD or Lycelle. Bottom line, the most important and effective thing you can do is comb out your child's hair using a fine toothed metal comb nightly for 2 weeks. There are local, professional services that will help you manage this situation, for example, *Lice Clinics America* and *Lice Clinics Virginia*.

Check family members for lice and treat if found.

Bedding, clothing that has recently been worn and head gear should be washed in hot water or put in a hot dryer for 20 minutes. Things that are not washable can be sealed in a plastic bag for two weeks. Hair accessories can be put in a plastic bag in the freezer for 24 hours. Note: lice live for 2 days away from the scalp—so extensive cleaning is not necessary. Simply vacuum areas where your child spends the most time.

## Lice Prevention

Using products regularly in your child's hair that will deter lice include using products such as coconut, tea tree oil, lavender, eucalyptus, rosemary, lemon grass, and peppermint – some examples are Head and Shoulders with tea tree oil, Fairy Tales Rosemary Repel Conditioning Spray, or SoCozy Kids Boo! Lice Leave-in Spray. Make it a habit to not share hats or brushes between siblings or friends.

All Saints School Nurse is available for consultation by calling the clinic from 8am - 3pm at 703.368.4400 ext. 207 or email at [jsullivan@allsaintsva.org](mailto:jsullivan@allsaintsva.org)

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#### *LICE*

*All students identified as having an active case of lice will be excluded from school until they receive treatment. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to provide appropriate and adequate treatment for the student and home environment as recommended by their health care professional. Readmission to school is determined by the school nurse/administration based upon re-inspection and the effectiveness of treatment. Follow up treatment is expected and verified by the school nurse/administration. Classroom contacts may be inspected.*