



Arlington Public Schools

Administrative Dist. No. 3

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Dear parents,

It has come to my attention that a student/students in our school has a case of head lice. While head lice is an annoying problem, it is not a danger to your child's health, so there is no need to panic. When a case has been confirmed, it becomes very important for you to check your family for lice immediately. Please know that anyone and everyone can get lice. Getting lice has nothing to do with whether you are clean or dirty, rich or poor, it only has to do with the fact that you are human. In an average school year, more children will "contract" lice than the common cold. If you find any live lice or eggs, it is absolutely necessary to treat each "infected" person, but more importantly, you must notify the school so that we can effectively and confidentially monitor the situation. These outbreaks end much more quickly when there is proper communication between parents and faculty.

Here is how you can check for lice:

In a brightly lit room, look through the hair and scalp for eggs and live lice. Do this by slowly looking through 1 inch sections of dry hair row by row starting at the base of the neck and moving forward toward the forehead. Focus on the hair closest to the scalp. The nape of the neck is a common breeding area for lice. A chopstick or a wooden pencil will help you to part the hair each time. Look on both sides of the part paying close attention to the hair within an inch of the scalp. If you are not sure about what you find, place it in a plastic zip bag and take it to healthcare professional/school nurse.

You are looking for two things:

1. Nits (eggs) are tiny greyish-brown "pussy willow bud" shaped ovals that will not come off of the hair very easily. Usually they are attached to the hair shaft very close to the scalp (if you blow on them and they don't move, they are probably nits) If you have nits, you need to do a full treatment.
2. Live Lice (bugs) are small brownish-grey insects. They move very fast, so chances are you won't see them. If you find lice, you need to do a full treatment.

Step 1:Treatment: Although this treatment may seem overwhelming and intimidating, each of these steps is necessary to end a cycle of lice. If you follow these steps your child will be lice-free. Here are the five steps to get rid of lice:

1. Kill the live lice
2. Get the eggs off of the head
3. Clean your environment
4. Inform your community
5. Follow-up treatment

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A few notes on treatment: Most over the counter pediculicides (lice poisons) are ineffective. Some are even toxic to humans. The lice that are alive today are resistant to poisons. The best way to kill lice today is with oils. Silicone-based oils like dimethicone oil work really well. Many of the non-toxic remedies contain this oil, which is safe (it's actually found in most cosmetics). Some people find that olive oil works best. Others use combinations of rosemary oil, tea tree oil, castor seed oil, cinnamon oil, etc. to kill the live lice. Some people use mayonnaise because it is made with oil and vinegar. Since most people don't feel like experimenting to figure out which oil and which combinations work, here are a few remedies that are available on the market that actually do work according to parental feedback.

Quit Nits : this kit contains an oil that is left on the head for four hours, or must be left on the head overnight for serious infestation, but effectively kills the live lice. Whole Foods market carries this kit, which includes a spray-on repellent for preventing reinfestation in the days following treatment.

The Nit Nanny: Lice and Scalp Treatment: this product is an oil that takes 15 minutes and effectively kills the live lice. Available from the Lice Lifters.

LiceMD: this product takes 10 minutes and effectively kills the live lice. Available at some corner pharmacies.

These products kill the lice, but not the nits (eggs). Now you must get rid of the eggs.

Step 2: Egg Removal Egg removal is rather simple but you must have a really good metal nit comb. Wet and towel-dry the head. With a regular brush or comb, work some conditioner through the entire length of the hair to remove knots. Next, in a small bowl, make a paste of 1 part regular hair conditioner (*Pantene Medium-Thick, Frizzy to Smooth* works best) and 1 part baking soda. (the baking soda helps act as a grit to pull the eggs off of the hair). Dip the nit comb into the paste before each stroke and comb through each section of the hair. Make sure to scrape along the scalp each time. The nits (eggs) are usually very close to the scalp. After each stroke, wipe the paste onto a moist white paper towel to remove the nits and dead lice (they will be visible against the white background of the towel). Do this to the entire head, and repeat in all four directions: nape to forehead, forehead to nape, right to left, and left to right. Be sure to comb the entire head. This process is sometimes referred to as a "comb-out".

Step 3 :Clean Your Environment There are four different ways to treat your environment for lice. Any of these will kill the lice.

1. Wash items in hot water in a clothes washer or dishwasher

or...

2. Seal items in a plastic bag for 2 weeks

or...

3. Vacuum the item

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or...

4. Dry items on high heat for 30 minutes in a clothes dryer

Here are some items that should be treated in your environment:

- any tools, combs, towels, or clothes that were used during the treatments and combings must be treated as instructed above
- bedding (sheets, pillow cases and blankets), pillows
- rugs, carpets
- hats, scarves, jackets
- book bags, gym bags
- car upholstery, car seats
- couches, sofas, easy chairs, throw pillows
- stuffed animals
- clothing and dress-up clothes
- all hair accessories
- hairbrushes and combs

Step 4: Inform Your Community This is probably the most important step to getting rid of lice and preventing re-infestation. People often don't want to tell anyone in their community for fear of embarrassment. There is nothing to be embarrassed about at all! If you have lice, you got it from someone you know. They may not even know that they have lice. It is important to let everyone around you know about your case of lice. If you do not tell those around you that you have it, you are not giving those people a chance to take preventive measures or get rid of their lice while it is in the beginning stages of infestation (not to mention the fact that they will likely, therefore, give it back to you!). Put yourself in someone else's shoes... Would you want to know if your family has been exposed to lice? Absolutely.

Who to tell about your case of lice:

1. Teachers of infected children
2. The school nurse
3. Anyone who has been in your home during your infestation
4. Anyone whose home you have slept in during your infestation
5. Playmates of infected children.
6. Babysitters of infected children

Step 5: Follow up For the next 21 days, it is important to remain vigilant about treatment. The life cycle of a louse is usually about 21 days at maximum. (A life cycle is different from a life span, which for a louse is around 30 days.) An adult louse lays an egg on Day 1. The egg hatches around Day 8. The nymph becomes an adult around Day 15. The adult starts to lay eggs around day 16. Therefore it is important to keep treating your child for the 21 days in case you missed an egg when combing - otherwise you'll be fully re-infested before you know it.

Here is an easy way to keep track of your treatment. This may seem like too much work, but it is a surefire way to get lice out of your life. Get your calendar out!

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Day 1: Treat the hair with something (See step 1) to kill the live lice. Do a Nit-combing to remove any eggs (see step 2). Clean your environment using the steps above. Your child can go back to school after this step is complete.

Day 3: Do a second Nit-combing to remove any eggs (see step 2). With a major infestation you may still get a few eggs on this day.

Day 7: Treat the hair with something (See step 1) to kill the live lice. Do a Nit-combing to remove any eggs (see step 2). You should be seeing less and less eggs now. It's a good idea to treat bedding and pillows again.

Day 10: Do a third Nit-combing to remove any eggs (see step 2) you should not be seeing many nits at this point.

Day 14: Treat the hair with something (See step 1) to kill the live lice. Do a Nit-combing to remove any eggs (see step 2). You should not be seeing many nits at this point.

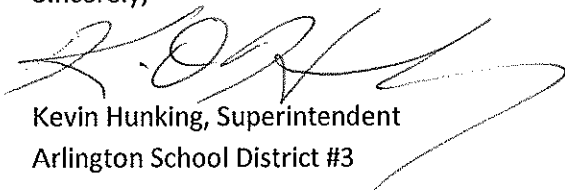
Day 17: Do a fourth Nit-combing to remove any eggs (see step 2) you should not be seeing any nits at this point.

Day 21: Do a fifth Nit-combing to remove any eggs (see step 2) If you haven't found anything since day 14, you are lice-free.

Ongoing: Check your head once a week or every other week until the outbreak has ended in your community.

This may seem like a lot of work, but if all infected families follow this treatment method, we will bring an end to this outbreak immediately. You will be getting updates from me about our general progress and I will keep you informed about this pesky problem. PLEASE, keep me informed if you find lice in your family so I can effectively and confidentially monitor the situation.

Sincerely,



Kevin Hunking, Superintendent
Arlington School District #3

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