

 **Bonner School District #14**

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Head Lice

An estimated 6 to 12 million infestations of head lice occur each year in the United States, most commonly among children ages 3 to 11. We regularly find cases of head lice at the beginning of each school year. **Please report any cases of head lice that are present in your home to the school nurse** so I can help support you and your student in effectively treating it and protect our student population from further transmission.

Head lice are not dangerous. They do not transmit disease, but they do spread easily. **Take the time to check your child’s head on a regular basis**. Using a strong light source, such as a headlamp, can be very helpful in detecting lice and their eggs. Concentrate your efforts on the scalp and beginning of the hair shaft. Lice can be present in any classroom, at any time of year. Regular checks at home are the most effective way to identify cases early.

Head lice are tiny, wingless insects that live close to the human scalp and are about the size of a sesame seed. They are a human parasite and only feed on human blood. The eggs, also called nits, are tiny, tear-drop shaped eggs that attach to the hair shaft. They are often found around the nape of the neck or behind the ears. Nits may appear tan or yellowish and can look similar to dandruff, but are difficult to remove.

A few things to consider:

* All household members and other close contacts should be checked, and those with evidence of an active infestation should be treated at the same time.
* There are a number of available treatments, including new prescription treatment options that are safe. For over the counter treatments, the active ingredient in Nix has been proven more effective than Rid.
* Resistance to some over-the-counter head lice treatments has been reported. With any treatment option, it is *essential* to use a lice comb and manually remove all lice and nits to prevent reinfestation.
* Family bed linens and recently used clothes, hats and towels should be washed in very hot water and run through a hot dryer.
* Personal articles such as combs, brushes and hair clips should also be washed in hot water if they are in contact with a person with head lice.
* School policy requires that your child stay home until your student has been treated and no live lice are found. We will continue to work with you after an infestation is detected to monitor the removal of nits and signs of re-infestation.

Please check out my website for useful links on head lice and treatment which you can access through the Bonner home page under “staff”. Do not hesitate to contact me if I can answer any questions or provide you with additional information and support.

Sincerely,

Lindsay Larson, RN

School Nurse