

# Head Lice & Bed Bugs

**Presented by Preschool Nurses**

# Background & Rationale



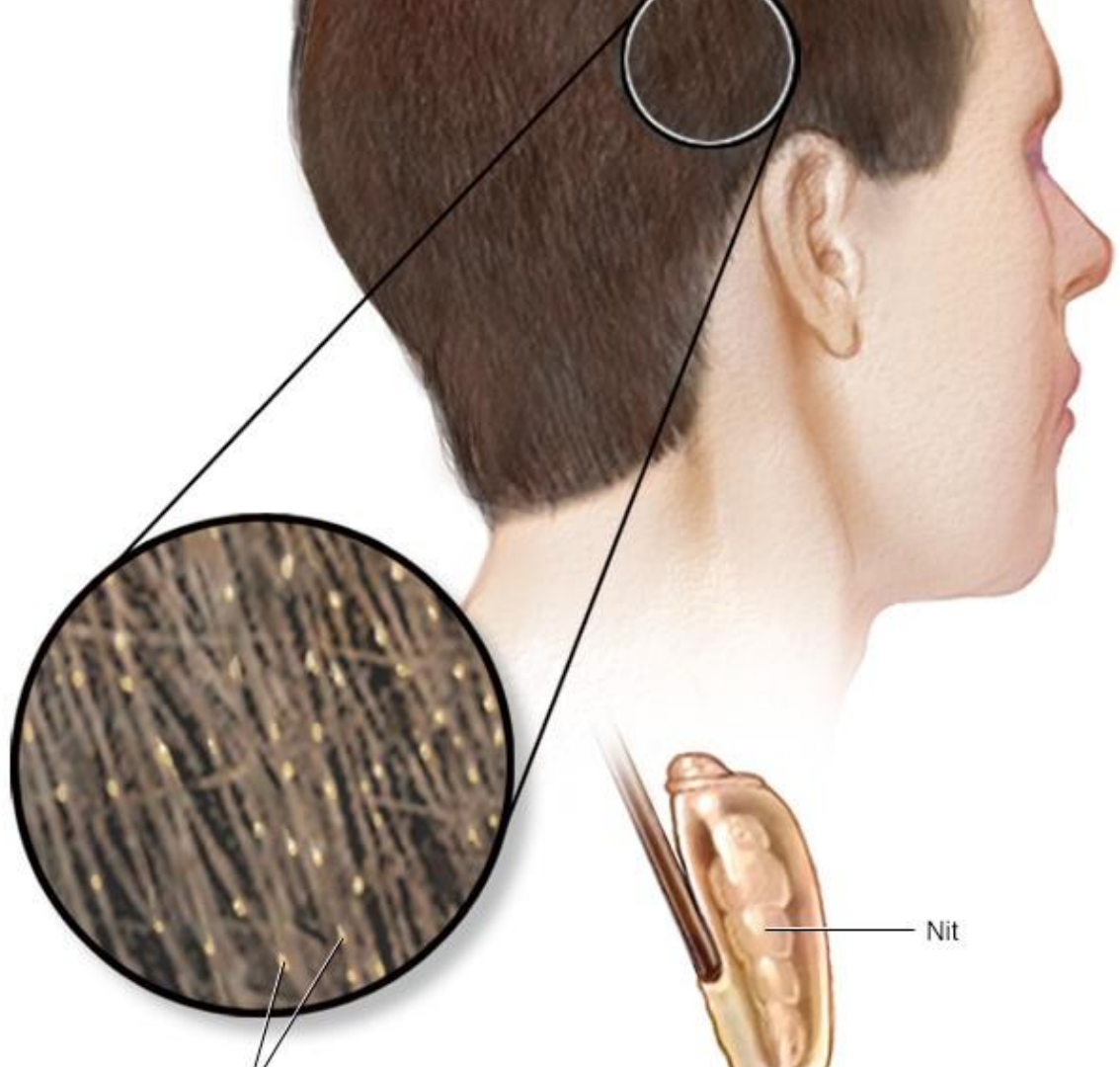
## According to the National Association of School Nurses:

- There are social & medical implications that head lice infestation is a common concern worldwide.
- In the United States, it is estimated that 6-12 million head lice infestations occur in children 3-11 years of age each year.
- Infestations are most likely to occur in preschool and elementary age students and their household members, regardless of socioeconomic status or geographic region (Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, 2019).
- The cost of treatment in the United States has been estimated to be \$500 million dollars per year (Cummings et al., 2018).
- “A head lice infestation is not a communicable disease and no health risks have been associated with head lice” (Pontius, 2014; CDC, 2015; CDC, 2019).

# What is Lice?

Lice are tiny, wingless, parasitic insects that feed on human blood.

Lice are easily spread – especially by schoolchildren – through close personal contact and by sharing belongings.



# Three types of Lice:



1. **Head lice** found on the scalp. They're easiest to see at the nape of the neck and over the ears.
2. **Body lice** live in clothing and on bedding and move onto your skin to feed. Body lice most often affect people who aren't able to bathe or launder clothing regularly, such as homeless individuals.
3. **Pubic lice** are called crabs. They occur on the skin and hair of the pubic area and, less frequently, on coarse body hair, such as chest hair, eyebrows or eyelashes.

People with good personal hygiene can still get lice.

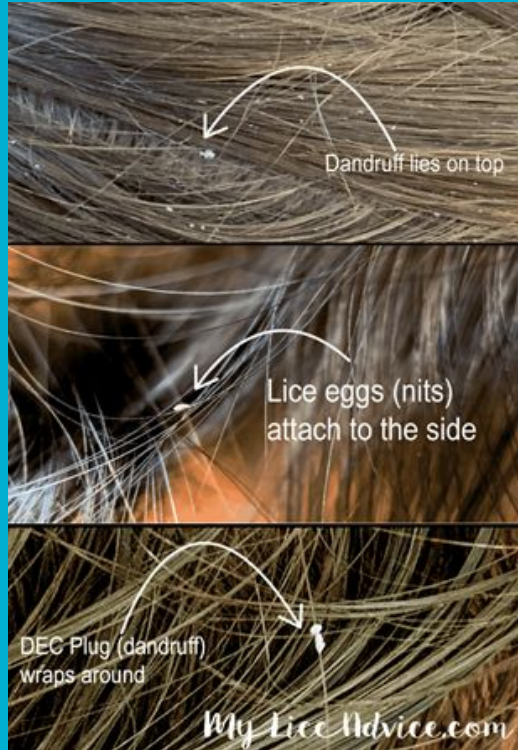
Unless treated properly, this condition can become a recurring problem.

# Common Signs and Symptoms of Lice

- **Intense itching** on the scalp, body or in the genital area.
- **Tickling feeling** from movement of hair.
- Adult lice may be about the size of a **sesame seed** or **slightly larger**.
- **Lice eggs (nits) on hair shafts.** Nits may be difficult to see because they're very tiny. They're easiest to spot around the ears and the nape of the neck. Nits can be mistaken for dandruff, but unlike dandruff, they can't be easily brushed out of hair.
- **Sores on the scalp, neck and shoulders.** Scratching can lead to small red bumps that can sometimes get infected with bacteria.
- **Bite marks** especially around the waist, groin, upper thighs and pubic area.



# When to See a Doctor



**See your doctor if you suspect a lice infestation.**

**Things often mistaken for nits include:**

- Dandruff
- Residue from hair products
- Bead of dead hair tissue on a hair shaft (hair cast)
- Scabs, dirt or other debris

# Causes

Female louse produces a sticky substance that firmly attaches each egg to the base of a hair shaft. Eggs hatch in six to nine days. You can get lice by coming into contact with either lice or their eggs. Lice can't jump or fly. **They spread through:**

- **Head-to-head or body-to-body contact.** This may occur as children or family members play or interact closely.
- **Proximity of stored belongings.** Storing infested clothing in closets, lockers, or on side-by-side hooks at school, or storing personal items such as pillows, blankets, combs, and stuffed toys in proximity at home can permit lice to spread.

- **Items shared among friends or family members.** These may include clothing, headphones, brushes, combs, hair decorations, towels, blankets, pillows, and stuffed toys.
- **Contact with contaminated furniture.** Lying on a bed or sitting in overstuffed, cloth-covered furniture recently used by someone with lice can spread them. Lice can live for one to two days off the body.
- **Sexual contact.** Pubic lice usually spread through sexual contact and most commonly affect adults.



# Prevention



- The spread of head lice among children in school settings is difficult to prevent due to close contact of the children and their belongings.
- Head lice are annoying, but they're not dangerous and they don't spread disease.
- They're not a sign of poor hygiene – head lice need blood and they don't care whether it's from someone who's clean or dirty.
- **Avoid head-to-head contact** with classmates during play and other activities.
- **Instruct your child not to share personal belongings** such as hats, scarves, coats, combs, brushes and hair accessories.





# Treatment

- **Over-the-counter Lice products-** Follow the directions closely when using these products.
- **Holistic-** A number of small studies have shown that ingredients in some of these products – mostly plant oils such as coconut, olive, rosemary, and tea tree – may work to repel lice. However, these products are classified as "natural" so they aren't regulated by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and their safety and effectiveness haven't been tested to FDA standards.
- **Oral and topical prescription medication-** These medications would be prescribed by medical providers in order to treat lice that haven't responded to other treatments.



## Body and Pubic lice

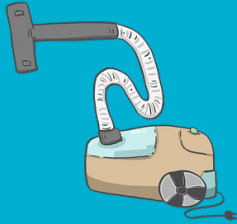
These types of lice should be treated with the same self care measures as you would with head lice. Consult with your medical doctor for the appropriate treatment.

# Steps to Eliminate Lice

- **Check other household members for lice and nits.**
- Treat anyone who has signs of an infestation.
- You may need to repeat treatment with the lotion or shampoo in about nine to 10 days after the first application.
- These lotions and shampoos typically aren't recommended for children under age 2.
- **Comb wet hair.** Use a nit comb to physically remove the lice from wet hair.
- Repeat every three to four days for at least two weeks if needed.



# Steps to Eliminate Lice



- **Wash contaminated items**-Wash bedding, stuffed animals, clothing, and hats with hot, soapy water – at least 130 F (54 C) – and place them in a dryer at high heat for at least 20 minutes.
- **Seal unwashable items**-Place them in an airtight bag for two weeks.
- **Vacuum**- The floor, furniture, and car seat. Change the vacuum bag when done.
- **Wash combs and brushes**- Use very hot, soapy water – at least 130 F (54 C) – or soak combs and brushes in rubbing alcohol for an hour.

**Don't worry about your household pets:** Lice prefer people to pets, so your pets don't need any treatment for lice.

## Checking for Head Lice?



- If your child is itchy and scratching their head, look for lice and nits on the scalp, behind the ears, and around the nape of the neck.
- It can be tough to find a nymph or adult louse because they move fast. Look for nits attached to the hair near the scalp. A magnifying glass and a bright light can help with your inspection or sitting near a window.



# Role of School Nurse with Head Lice



- To identify and confirm if a student has head lice.
- Check the entire class.
- Call the parent of the student with the confirmed case of head lice.
- Send head lice letters-Informing parents that a student in their class was identified having head lice.
- Instruct on how to treat and eliminate in the home.
- **Classroom Procedure dealing with lice:**
  - Bagging stuffed animals and dramatic play clothing.
  - Helmets for gross motor need to be cleaned.
  - Inform the custodian for cleaning the classroom.
- **Student returning to school post head lice:**
  - Students are not allowed to go on the bus.
  - Parents or guardian need to take their child to the school nurse's office for a head lice check.
  - **Active Lice Found** = needs to go home.
  - **No Lice Found** = allowed to return to school.

# Perth Amboy Public School Head Lice Policy

## District Policy 8454 - Management of Pediculosis

Section: Operations  
Date Created: March 2018  
Date Edited: March 2018



## Important Points on Head Lice District Policy:

- The presence of nits (the eggs of lice) without active head lice will not prohibit a child from attending school, provided proof of treatment has been provided to the nurse and there is no evidence of active head lice in the student's hair.
- If a student is found to have active head lice, the student will not be permitted to attend school until there are no active lice in the student's hair.
- Proof of treatment (such as receipt or empty container) must be provided to the nurse and, until all live and/or dead head lice are removed from the student's hair, must be confirmed by an examination by the school nurse.



## Head Lice, Schools, & Families:

- School will provide information to parents that treatment on their child is needed if active head lice or nits are found in their child's scalp.
- Parents are expected to notify the school nurse if they find active head lice or nits in their child's scalp.
- The school nurse will perform head checks of all students in a classroom where there are active head lice cases or nits.





# Bed Bugs





# Bed Bugs and Schools



Bed bugs have long been a pest – feeding on blood, causing itchy bites and generally irritating their human hosts. They are successful hitchhikers and can move from an infested site to furniture, bedding, backpacks, carpets, and clothing.

## Health Concerns

- Minor skin irritations that itch
  - Itching can lead to excessive scratching, which can increase the chance of a secondary skin infection
- Moderate allergic reactions, which require medical attention
- Severe allergic reactions, which require immediate medical attention
- Increased stress is caused by minor skin irritations and the loss of sleep

**Bed bugs are not known to transmit disease, their presence may cause distress**

# Dealing with Bed Bugs in Schools



If a bed bug is found on a child in school, **it does not mean the child brought the bed bug into the school.** Bed bugs do not infest people; they only feed on them. Bed bugs can crawl onto or off of a person (or their belongings) at any time.

## **If a bed bug is found:**

- Inform the school administrator as well as the custodian.

# Bed Bugs



**Bed bugs can be hard to find and identify, given their small size and their habit of staying hidden. There are many bugs that look like bed bugs.**

**Bed Bug Eggs are:**

- Tiny, the size of a pinhead;
- Pearl-white in color; and size of poppy seed

**Bed Bugs are:**

about the size of an apple seed (5-7 mm or 3/16 - 1/4 inch long).

- Long and brown, with a flat, oval-shaped body (if not fed recently).
- Balloon-like, reddish-brown, and more elongated (if fed recently).

# Looking for Signs of Bed Bugs

When cleaning, changing bedding, or staying away from home, look for:

- Rusty or reddish stains on bed sheets or mattresses caused by bed bugs being crushed.
- Dark spots (**about this size: •**), which are bed bug excrement and may bleed on the fabric like a marker would.
- Live bed bugs.

[Click here for more information](#)



# Perth Amboy Public School Bed Bugs Policy

Section: Property 7424  
Bed Bugs

Date Created:

September 2017

Date Edited: August 2017



## Important Points on Bed Bugs District Policy

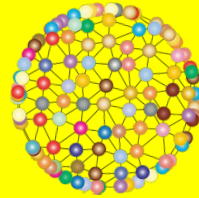
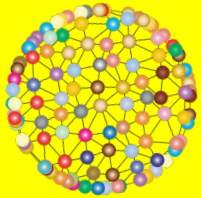
- The Board of Education is concerned for students who may have bed bugs in their home with the potential for these students to bring bed bugs into the school building.
- Bed bugs can be transmitted from one location to another in backpacks, clothing, books, and other items.
- A bed bug infestation is unlikely in a school and the Board adopts this Policy as a proactive action to prevent infestation and to stop bed bugs from spreading within the school setting if a bed bug is transmitted into a school.
- In the event the inspection determines bed bugs are in the school, the area(s) where bed bugs have been found or could be found will be treated by a licensed pest management professional.

# References

- [Mayo Clinic: Lice: Symptoms and Causes](#)
- [CDC: Parasites](#)
- [Kids Health: Head Lice](#)
- [EPA: Bed Bugs](#)
- [NASN: Head Lice](#)
- [Perth Amboy Public Schools](#)



**Questions,  
Comments, or  
Concerns?**



# Contact Information

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