

Stonybrook School Pediculosis/Head Lice General Information

Pediculosis is an infestation of the scalp by an insect that feeds on human blood. It is a very common contagious condition, usually spread by direct head to head contact. Hats, helmets, clothing, brushes, and pillows are other ways head lice can spread from one person to another. Although head lice do not transmit diseases, secondary infections can develop from scratching the itchy bites.

Head lice are small, only about 1/16th of an inch, and are grey or tan in color. Lice cannot fly or jump, but do move quickly and are therefore very difficult to find on the scalp. Diagnosis of head lice is generally made when lice eggs (nits) are seen. Nits are teardrop in shape and also very small, only about 1/32nd of an inch. The white, tan or brown nits are glued to the hair shaft and cannot be washed or brushed out like dandruff. Nits can be found anywhere on the head but are usually clustered around the ears and the nape of the neck.

Treating head lice involves the use of a pediculicidal (lice killing) shampoo such as Nix or Rid, cleaning of the environment, and removal of the nits. Students may return to school after treatment. Pediculicides can be found in the grocery store or pharmacy. Ask a pharmacist for assistance if needed. www.kidshealth.org is an excellent web resource for parents and children. The American Academy of Pediatrics <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/cgi/content/abstract/126/2/392> and the Harvard School of Public Health www.harvard.edu/headlice.html are sources for more additional clinical information about pediculosis.

The management of pediculosis at home and school is a TEAM EFFORT! Students with head lice are treated at home and then rechecked by the nurse before returning to school. Parents are urged to check their children on a regular basis and to **report all cases or suspected cases to the school nurse immediately.**

Again, if lice are detected, inform Mrs. Bowers and the parents of recent close contacts. Do not hesitate to contact Mrs. Bowers for further information: 973-838-1999 or bowersm@kinnelon.org.

Please understand that all health information is confidential.



