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## LICE FACTS

Head lice cause unnecessary absence from school and work, millions of dollars misspent on remedies, and unnecessary treatment of misdiagnosed infestations.

Studies demonstrate that screening for head lice in schools does not decrease the incidence of head lice. Results of studies suggest that education of parents in identifying and managing head lice is more effective and that class wide or school wide screening should be discouraged.

The National Association of School Nurses, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, have all recommended that students with nits and/or head lice infestation not be excluded from school.

For more information:

[www.nasn.org](http://www.nasn.org)  
[www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)  
[www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org)  
<https://identify.us.com>  
[www.dhhs.nh.gov](http://www.dhhs.nh.gov)

### Disclaimer:

The ConVal School District **does not** endorse or recommend any product, process or services. It is not the intent of the ConVal School District to provide specific medical advice but rather provide users with information to better understand the treatment of head lice. Specific medical advice cannot be provided and the ConVal School District urges you to consult with a qualified healthcare provider for diagnosis and treatment advice.

The ConVal School District is not responsible for the availability or content of the external web site links nor does the ConVal School District endorse, warrant or guarantee the products, services, or information described or offered at these internet sites.

Prepared by the ConVal School District school nurses.

Updated October 26, 2017

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## GUIDELINES ON HEAD LICE

### CONVAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

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## FAQ'S

### Q. What are head lice?

A. Head lice are insects about the size of sesame seeds, about 1/8<sup>th</sup> inch long, that only live on human

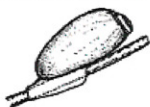


heads. Their color can vary from gray to dark brown. Their food source is human blood. The presence of head lice is not due to lack of hygiene or cleanliness of the

home. Head lice actually prefer clean long hair.

### Q. What are nits?

A. A nit is a teardrop shaped egg that is cemented to one side of the hair shaft about 1/4 inch from the



scalp. A female louse can lay 6 – 8 nits a day. Nits hatch in 12 days into a nymph. The nymphs immediately begin

feeding on the human head and become adult lice in 9 – 12 days.

### Q. How long do lice live?

A. Adult lice live up to 30 days. Head lice usually survive for less than one day away from the scalp. Their eggs cannot hatch at a temperature lower than that near the scalp.

### Q. How do I get head lice?

A. Head lice are wingless. They cannot hop, jump or fly. Head lice cling to hair and are mostly transmitted by direct head to head contact. Transmission by shared combs, brushes, hats, and helmets is possible, but not likely.

### Q. How do I know if my child has head lice?

A. The best way is to find a live louse on the head. This can be difficult as they move extremely fast. The nits may be easier to spot at the nape of the neck, behind the ears, and on the crown of the head. Scratching may be noticed. However, the first time a person is infested, scratching may not be evident.

## FAQ'S

### Q. How do I treat a head lice/nit infestation?

A. The ConVal school district does not endorse any particular treatment. Please consult your Primary Care Provider (PCP) for treatment advice. Some proper treatment options include:

- Pediculocides/ovicides – shampoos with pesticides are available over the counter and/or by prescription. **Be sure to read and follow all package instructions.**
- Suffocation – this includes suffocating the lice with mayonnaise or olive oil.
- Electronic devices – there are electronic combs available that detect and remove lice.
- Other agents, such as natural remedies, are available.

Check with your pharmacist or PCP to determine which method is best and safe for your family.

**NEVER** use any flammable substance such as kerosene or gasoline. Hair coloring, such as bleach or dye, is not an effective treatment.

### Q. Should I treat all family members?

A. All family members should be carefully inspected for head lice and treated only if head lice are found.

### Q. Who should be notified?

A. The parent/guardian should notify any close contacts such as playmates or friends who have slept over as transmission occurs by head to head contact. The school will send home notices if a student has been identified as having live lice.

### Q. Can my pets get head lice?

No, head lice only live on human heads.

*Your school nurse is available for consultation.  
Please feel free to call with any questions or concerns.*

## FAQ'S

### Q. Do I need to get rid of the nits?

A. Yes. Every successful lice removal program must include manual nit picking. Lice combs work well, as do fingernails. Getting rid of head lice requires time and patience. Every strand of hair should be examined. Comb all family members daily for 3 weeks.

### Q. How do I treat my house?

A. The most important place to start is with the student and removal of lice/nits. Wash all recently worn clothing including outerwear. Wash all bed linen, pajamas, and towels. Wash/vacuum stuffed animals or store items that are not washable in a sealed plastic bag for 7 days. Drying items at temperatures greater than 130 degrees will kill stray lice or nits. Vacuum furniture, carpeting, and car where the student has been in contact in the past 24-48 hours.

### Q. Should I spray my house with insect spray?

A. No, it is not recommended as exposure to humans cannot be controlled and nits are unlikely to incubate and hatch at room temperature. Note that head lice do not survive off the human head for more than a day or two and viable nits die within a week.

### Q. Can my child get sick from head lice?

A. Head lice are a nuisance, however they are not known to spread any disease agents. The greatest danger is a secondary infection from scratching the head.

### Q. Will a child with lice be sent home immediately?

A. Not necessarily. If a child has live lice, the possibility of transmission to others has been present for at least a month. Sending children home deprives them of valuable educational time. Using her/his professional judgement, the school nurse will determine if the student needs to go home.

### Q. Will my child's class be checked?

A. No. Screening for nits is not an accurate way of predicting if children are or will be, infested. Screening for live lice has not been proven to have a significant effect on the incidence of head lice in school.