

Knoxville School District #202
We're back in school and with that comes
FACTS ABOUT LICE*

Definitions: Louse-small insect that lives on the scalp

Lice- more than one louse

Nit-eggs, dead or alive of a louse Louse-small insect that lives on the scalp

Parasite-lives off another, in this case the blood of humans

Infestation-having an insect present, in this case, in your head

Pediculosis-having an infestation of lice

Lice are spread only by head to head contact.

They are much harder to get than a cold, flu, ear infection, pink eye, strep throat, or impetigo.

Lice are species specific. You can only get human lice from another human. You cannot get another animal's lice. (Not from your dog or cat)

Transmission is much more common from family members, overnight guests and playmates who spent a large amount of time together. School is a very rare source of lice transmission.

Hairbrushes, combs, clothing, hats, pillows and sheets that are shared in a household are the most common modes of transmission.

Lice actually like clean hair more than dirty.

You get lice by close personal contact with someone else who has lice, not by being dirty.

Lice can only crawl. They can neither fly nor jump. They must crawl from one person to another.

Nits are cemented to the hair and very hard to remove. They cannot fall off. Newly hatched larvae must find a head quickly or will die.

Lice live only 1-2 days off the head.

Only the person with lice should be treated. Lice shampoos are INSECTICIDES and can be dangerous if used incorrectly or too frequently.

Household members and close contacts should be checked every week, but only **treat** those who actually have lice.

Checking family members and close playmates is much more appropriate than checking a classroom when one student has lice.

Lice do not spread any known disease. They are annoying and icky, but cause no disease.

By the time lice is discovered, the child has usually had them for 3-4 weeks.

Over the last 10 years multiple studies have proven the school RARELY is the place of lice transmission. The studies have shown that preschool and kindergarten have a greater risk of transmission because how they play and rest close together.

This is how our school handles lice:

♣The school district nurse will check any student reported to possibly have lice.

♣If active lice or nits (eggs) are found, the parent will be confidentially notified. The school nurse will provide information to the parents about proper treatment.

♣ Parents of children with head lice will be encouraged to talk to other parents of close playmates.

♣ Household members of the person with lice will also be checked.

♣Parents will NOT be informed of other names of children who have lice in school, as that is a privacy concern AND the risk of getting lice from a classmate is very small.

♣ Students with lice must be checked when they return to school and one week later to make sure all the lice are gone. This is done in the nurse's office.

♣ If a parent does not follow through with the proper treatment, then the child with lice will be excluded from school until proper treatment has been completed.

♣ Lice are very common. They always exist in children and in schools. No school is ever lice-free, just like no school is free of head colds.

*References: Center for Disease Control (CDC), American Academy of Pediatrics, the National Association of School Nurses, the American School Health Association, and the Harvard School of Public Health.