

Montgomery County Department of
Health and Human Services
Public Health Services
School Health Services

Montgomery County
Public Schools

Date: _____

Dear Parent:

Anyone can get head lice. If your child comes home with head lice, don't panic. Millions of school aged children get head lice each year. Children play in close contact with each other, exchange hats, clothing, brushes, combs and 'sleep-over' at their friend's homes. These activities can result in the transmission of head lice from one child to another. This is what you can do to prevent head lice.

BE ALERT FOR THE SIGNS OF HEAD LICE: The most common sign is intense itching on the back of the neck and head. If you observe your child scratching in this area, check their head for nits attached to the hair shafts. The eggs of head lice are called nits. The tiny yellowish white or grayish white nits are shaped like a tiny teardrop speck. The female attaches the nits to the hair shaft, close to the scalp with a glue-like substance that makes it nearly impossible to remove the nits. Ordinary combing, brushing or shampooing will not shake them.

INSPECT: Examine the hair and scalp of all family members regularly throughout the year. That means mothers, dads, aunts and uncles as well as children that live in the same house. Forget the pets-they don't carry human lice. Lice are small grayish-tan, wingless insects. Close inspection of the hair and scalp will sometimes reveal the adult lice, but you are more likely to see the nits.

TREAT: If lice are found, or your child has been excluded from school because of a lice infestation, use a special over-the-counter treatment, called a pediculicide. Use the pediculicide according to directions. After the treatment and the hair are dry, the nits may be removed with a special nit comb. *Lice treatment is a job for an adult.* Do not ask your child to do this if you really want to be sure of effective treatment. Just remember this: one remaining nit that hatches will soon lay eggs and you'll have to go through the whole procedure again! Parents should check their child's head daily for the next 14 days to ensure lice have been eliminated.

CLEAN UP THE ENVIRONMENT: Lice are easily spread from one person to another by sharing articles, such as combs, brushes, towels, pillows and hats. Wash all lice exposed clothes, towels and bed linens. Dry in a hot drier if possible. Soak combs and brushes in hot water for 10 minutes. Items which can not be washed, for example stuffed animals, can be sealed in a plastic bag for 10 days. Vacuum carpets, upholstery, pillows, mattresses and car seats which have been exposed to persons with head lice. Following all these environmental measures is the best method of preventing reinfestation of lice.

NOTIFICATION: If you discover that your child has head lice, please call the school so that necessary precautions may be taken to prevent the spread of infestation. Every effort will be made to protect the confidentiality of your call. If head lice become a problem at school, we may need to consider classroom inspection. This will be done by trained parents or community volunteers. If you have questions, please call the school nurse. Let us have a head lice free year!

Principal

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School Community Health Nurse

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