

HEAD LICE

(Pediculosis capitis)

AGENT, INCUBATION, AND SYMPTOMS

Infectious Agent: Pediculosis capitis

Incubation: The eggs of lice may hatch in 6-10 days. The egg to egg cycle averages 2-3 weeks.

Symptoms: Irritation and itching of scalp or neck; sores on the head from scratching; presence of small light grey insects and/or their eggs (nits), which are attached to the base of the hairs.

TRANSMISSION

Method of Spread: Direct contact with an infected person and indirect contact with their personal belongings, especially clothing, bedding and headgear.

Period of Communicability: While lice or nits remain alive on the infected person or on clothing.

CONTROL

Exclusion: Treat at end of day and readmit once first treatment completed. The American Academy of Pediatrics does not recommend sending children home early if lice are discovered.

Disinfection: When a student is found with head lice, all family members should be inspected and treated. Machine wash and dry clothing, bed linens, and other items that the infected person wore or used during the 2 days before treatment using hot water (>130°F) OR place items in a sealed bag and store for 2 weeks. Vacuum the furniture and floor, particularly where the infested person sat or lay. Treatment requires over-the-counter or prescription pediculicide (lice medicine).

OTHER INFORMATION

CDC Fact Sheet <http://www.cdc.gov/parasites/lice/head/disease.html> 11595

CDC Treatment Recommendations <http://www.cdc.gov/parasites/lice/head/treatment.html>