

February 10, 2015

Head Lice (Pediculosis)

Dear St. Dunstan Parent/Guardian:

Head lice are tiny, grayish-white insects that live on the scalp and cause itching. They lay eggs, called nits, which are firmly attached to the hair, usually at the nape of the neck and behind the ears. When examining for lice, the nits are usually seen first. The nits may look like a dandruff but on close inspection prove to be a bud-shaped and not easily removed from the hair.

Head lice spread rapidly by person -to- person contact and by exchange of combs, caps, hats, scarves, etc. Children should be taught not to share such personal articles.

To rid the scalp of lice, a medicated shampoo must be used to destroy both the lice and the un-hatched nits. All other members of the household should be examined for lice and all those infested should be treated at the same time.

Children with lice will be excluded from school until successfully treated. Studies have shown that the medicated shampoos, which can be purchased at the drugstore are not 100% effective. They will kill adult lice and not the eggs (nits). The most effective treatment is using a medicated shampoo and then removing **all nits** with an effective fine tooth comb or using your fingers to pull out all eggs (nits). After this process you should check for any new nits and remove them.

About cleaning: Clean areas where you child would have had contact with their head in the last 24 hours. Dry heat for 20 minutes will kill the nits (i.e. For pillows)

The child will be re-admitted to school with proof of treatment (parent/guardian must bring student to the clinic with the box top from medicated shampoo and note from parent). The hair and scalp should be checked at home carefully every day for a few weeks. The treatment should be repeated once if there is continued evidence of lice or nits that are close to the scalp. Nits an inch and a half or more from the scalp are usually dead. **If live lice or new nits are found in the hair, the child will be excluded again until treated.**

**Please check your child's head every day for the next several weeks.
Let's see if we can catch this before it escalates!!!**

Please note the following instructions:

***** Most important: Clean any area where your child's head has been in the last 24 hours.**

1. Check every member of the family. Lice eggs (nits) are hard to spot, so look for tiny white eggs (nits) on hair shafts, near the scalp, especially at the nape of the neck and behind the ears. Head lice are small, wingless, grayish-tan insects. Any family member with lice or nits must be treated.

2. **Use an effective head lice treatment.** Several treatments are available without a prescription. Follow the directions on the package exactly. Consult with your doctor before treating a child under the age of two.

3. **Remove all nits.** Gently comb the child's hair with the special nit removal comb. Beware: The combs found in drugstore kits are not effective. There are effective ones available - call the Clinic.

4. **Wash clothes, bed linens (again, think about where your child has laid his/her head).** Use hot water, then dry on the hot cycle for at least 20 minutes. (Pillows, stuffed animals) Items that are not machine-washable such as stuffed animals, headphones and hats can be tightly sealed in a plastic bag for at least 24 hours.

5. **Soak combs, brushes, etc., in hot water.** The hotter the better, but the temperature should be at least 130 °F. Items should soak for at least 10 minutes.

6. **Lint Removers:** To make sure the rest of your home is free of lice, you can use the rolled lint removers on upholstered furniture or car seats. You can vacuum carpets if necessary.

7. **Girls: Please tie that long hair back into a tight bun or braid. And...no hair accessories!**

- Please call the Clinic to report any case of lice in your family.
- A notice will be sent out to your grade's families so they will be alerted.
- Treat the hair, do the laundry, and vacuum the house on the same day to kill the lice at once.
- For the next 21 days, inspect your child's hair for nits and lice.
- **Students must be nit-free before being readmitted to school.**
- **A parent/guardian must accompany the student to the school Clinic for readmission along with proof of treatment. (Box top of the shampoo treatment)**

Thank you for your cooperation.