



## Elmira City School District

### Dealing with Lice

**What are head lice?** Insects found only in human hair and are **NOT** a serious medical problem. They do **NOT** carry any diseases and can **NOT** be transmitted to or from pets. It is treatable and **NOT** life threatening. They can **NOT** jump or fly, they can only crawl.

**Symptoms:** Itching of the head, especially behind the ears or at the back of the neck.

**Checking For:** Part hair and look at scalp for nits (eggs). They can be easier to see behind the ears or hairline at back of neck.

Comb through small sections of hair with a fine tooth comb. After each comb-through, wipe the comb on a wet paper towel and then examine the scalp, hair, comb and paper towel.

It can be difficult to distinguish between dandruff, dried hair gel and nits.

**Treatment:** Treatment is a 3-part process.

1. You may want to have your child seen by your healthcare provider who can prescribe treatment covered by Medicaid. You can also purchase treatment at your local pharmacy or discount store. Treatment comes in the form of shampoo, cream rinse, gel or mousse. The only treatment approved by the FDA contain permethrin or pyrethrins. Use exactly according to package instructions. They can be toxic if left on the head longer. Treat all family members and anyone the infected person may have stayed with or slept over.
2. Comb out the nits with a fine tooth comb. It will keep any eggs from hatching that were not killed with the treatment. It does take a lot of time and patience and you may want to give your child something to keep busy while combing. Check hair daily for at least a month. Retreat according to product recommendations in about 7 – 10 days.
3. No need to throw anything away but all items used by the infected person should be treated.
  - a. Wash anything that is machine washable (bedding, towels, hats, coats, clothing, etc.) in hot water and put in hot dryer for at least 20 minutes.
  - b. Anything that cannot be machine washed should be put in a plastic trash bag and sealed for 2 weeks.
  - c. Vacuum all rugs, furniture, mattresses, pillows, car seats and anything else the infected person was in contact with 24-48 hours before treatment. Dispose of the vacuum bag inside another plastic bag and remove from the house for the trash.

**Return to School:** The student may return to school the day after treatment however the parent or guardian must accompany the student to the nurse's office to be checked again. If the nurse does find more, please be sure she shows them to you so you know exactly what to look for during treatment. If additional lice are found, the student will need to return home for additional treatment.

**Your school nurse is an expert on the subject.  
Please feel free to ask questions. She is there to help. ☺**