

Head Lice Guidelines

Recommended by Health Services
Harlan Community Schools

In the event that several cases of head lice are reported by parents or they are found on more than one student during school time hours, a notice will be sent home reminding parents to check their children.

Parents should assume that lice are present in schools all year. Parents will be asked to monitor their children on a weekly basis and to keep the school informed on the progress of the treatment.

If live lice are found on a student during the course of the day, parents will be informed and asked to shampoo and comb out nits before returning to school the next day. Exclusion from school can stigmatize a child, interfere with education, and will accomplish very little in interrupting the transmission of head lice. However, non-treatment will result in exclusion from school until treatment has begun.

Recommended treatment consists of two parts. The first part involves the use of therapeutic shampoos, which should be used according to label instructions or from recommendations made by a physician or pharmacist

The second part should be seen as a two-week process of daily use of an **ordinary** shampoo followed by a cream rinse conditioner, along with combing the wet hair with a fine-tooth comb and frequently cleaning the comb on a paper towel between strokes to remove scalp debris and lice.

For instance, therapeutic (medicated) shampoos should be utilized on days 1 and 7; and ordinary shampoos followed by cream rinse conditioner and wet combing on all days (2-6 and 8-14 days). Efforts at fine tooth combing of wet hair daily are very important.

Environmental attention includes laundry of *pillowcases, bed linen and clothing worn by the child on the day of diagnosis*. Environmental lice sprays are not recommended due to potential health threats. Unlike other pests, fleas and ticks, the head louse must live on its host to survive.

During the course of treatment, children may be monitored but will be allowed to stay in school. The described approach reduces exposure of children to pediculocide chemicals (treatment shampoos), provides a measure of daily progress toward successful treatment, reduces "treatment failure", eliminates lice while the child is attending classes, switches the focus from the environment to the infested individuals, reduces the overall cost of management, and is much more child-friendly.

Procedure for wet combing the hair to remove the nits-Days 1-14

1. The use of white vinegar as a rinse or a commercial product to help loosen lice eggs saves combing time.
2. Divide the hair into 1" sections.
3. Hold each section at hair's end and comb as close to scalp as possible.
4. Comb repeatedly until all nits are gone.
5. Pin back sections as you go.
6. When all hair is combed soak comb in very hot water (130 degrees) for 15 minutes.

Children should be free from head lice. They also need to attend school to get an education. Parents have the *primary responsibility* for treatment of lice, just as school staff is responsible for teaching.