

PARENT ALERT

Contagious disease exposure in room/location _____ on _____.

HEAD LICE (Pediculosis)

WHAT IS IT? Head lice are small insects that live on the scalp, behind ears and near the neckline of a person. They attach their eggs to a person's hair shaft with a sticky, glue-like substance and feed on blood. They do not cause diseases.

WHERE DID IT COME FROM? Head lice lives in the head of a person and can spread by sharing infested objects such as scarves, combs, brush, headphones, hat, pillow, and personal clothing. Lice do not fly or jump.

WHEN AND HOW CAN YOU CATCH IT? Head lice can spread through head-to-head contact with an infested person or sharing infested objects. Lice do not care if your head is clean, dirty, dry, oily, short hair, long hair, young or old. They just crawl and feed to the nearest warm head.

HOW LONG BEFORE THE SYMPTOMS APPEAR? Tickling or crawling feeling, intense itching and scratching on scalp, irritability and difficulty sleeping at night may start right away. Lice is hard to see, and nits (eggs) may be found upon inspection.

WHAT ARE POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS? Scratching vigorously can cause infection, but normally there are no complications from head lice.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?

1. Check your children's head daily and wash your hands after checking.
2. If your child has lice:
 - a. Inspect and treat all family members with medication at the same time. Wash your hands.
 - b. Wash (hot water) or dry clean all items that have touched the hair or scalp.
 - c. Thoroughly vacuum stuffed furniture and carpeting.
 - d. Anything that cannot be washed, dry cleaned, or vacuumed, i.e., stuffed toys, hats, etc.) should be sealed in a plastic bag for two (2) weeks. Lice die after 2 days without food.
 - e. Notify the Center for parent notification or posting Parent Alert if applicable.
 - f. See a health professional if head lice infestation is NOT resolved after multiple head lice treatments. A prescription for head lice treatment may be needed.

WHAT WILL THE CENTER STAFF DO?

1. Staff will follow Center's policies and procedures on parent notification and posting Parent Alert.
2. Meticulous handwashing and ensuring children's belongings are labeled, stored and not touching per childcare national standards ([Caring for our Children, Chapter 5](#).)
3. "If lice are seen on a child at school, parents/caregivers should be notified at the end of the school day and given a copy of [CDPH Head Lice Flyer](#)" (CDPH, Dec 2022), (CDC).
4. Check children's head daily for at least 2 weeks and follow Center's policies and procedures when a child was found with head lice.
5. Review and follow the latest recommendations from [CDC](#) or [CDPH](#).

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WHEN CAN THE CHILD RETURN TO CLASS? After treatment is completed and no lice found, or when meeting admission criteria set by the Center. *If you have any questions, please contact your childcare center and healthcare provider.*

References: [CDC](#), [CDPH](#), [National Resource Center For Health and Safety In Child Care and Early Education](#)

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