

(sample letter)

Dear Parents:

Your child has been exposed to head lice recently. This is an easily treated condition that is generally not associated with any serious medical complications. This letter will acquaint you with the nature of the infestation and how to screen your child at home. Do not treat the child or environment unless you see nits (eggs) or crawling forms of head lice.

How it is acquired: Head lice are usually transmitted through close personal contact with another infested individual or by the sharing of combs and other hair accessories, or through co-mingling of these items at homes, at homes of friends, at schools, at churches, or at other public places.

What to look for: Lice do not have wings, and cannot fly or jump, but do move quickly making it difficult to find in a child's hair. A nit is a louse egg. Nits vary in color and are found attached to the hair shaft with a waterproof cement-like substance that makes them difficult to remove. Nits must be loosened before being combed from the hair.

Treatment: (see below)

Cleaning of personal articles and environment:

1. Lice can live up to 48 hours off the human body: nits can survive for up to 10 days. To avoid re-infestation, it is important to clean your child's personal use items. Heat is lethal to lice and nits, thus many personal articles can be disinfected by washing in HOT water and drying using the HOT cycle for 20 minutes.
2. Dry clean clothes not washable.
3. Soak brushes, combs and other hair articles in a small amount of lice shampoo for at least 10 minutes.
4. Major house cleaning is not necessary. Lice prefer warm temperatures and want to stay on the body. Change the bag in the vacuum cleaner after use and discard. Any objects not being cleansed should be put into a tight sealed plastic bag for 2 weeks and then shaken outside.

Sincerely,

School Nurse