

What you should know about lice...

Head lice are very common for school-aged children and are often most apparent at the beginning of the year when children have recently returned from camps or other situations where sleeping quarters are shared. *While inconvenient, head lice cause no medical harm, can be effectively treated and are not a reason for missing days at school.*

What Are Lice?

Lice are parasitic insects that live and lay eggs on the human scalp. They survive by feeding on human blood. Lice infestations (pediculosis) are spread most commonly by close person-to-person contact.

Important Facts:

- Head lice are not a health hazard, a sign of poor hygiene or responsible for the spread of any disease.
- No healthy child should be excluded from or miss school because of head lice.
- School nurses can help with suggestions about treatment.
- Dogs, cats, and other pets do not play a role in the transmission of human lice.
- Lice move by crawling; they cannot hop or fly.
- Both over-the-counter and prescription medications are available for treatment of lice infestations.

Ladue School District Practices Regarding Lice

For the child found to have lice while at school...

- The child will likely remain in class until the end of the day and discouraged from close contact with others. (The age and development of the child will be taken into account by the school nurse in making this decision.)
- The school nurse will notify the parents with a phone call or a note and require that proper treatment be provided before the child returns to school.
- Information on treating head lice will be provided to the parents.
- The school nurse will check the child before he or she reenters the classroom and after 9-12 days of treatment, at the parent's request.
- To prevent embarrassment or social stigmatism, the child's infestation will be kept confidential.

For the classroom of a child with lice...

- A letter will be sent home to all parents in the class along with educational information on the detection and prevention of head lice.
- Parents will be encouraged to check their children at home and directed to provide treatment if lice are detected.
- At the school nurse's discretion, the maintenance staff may use intervention techniques in the classroom to attempt to avoid further spreading.
- Screening of an entire classroom will not be done unless there are three or more confirmed cases in a single classroom.

This information, along with the guidelines followed by the Ladue School District, are in accordance with the recommendations by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the Harvard School of Public Health.

For more information, in addition to answers to Frequently Asked Questions, the following Web sites are recommended:

<http://www.cdc.gov/lice/>

<http://www.aap.org/advocacy/releases/july2610studies.htm>

<http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/headlice.html>

<http://www.time.com/time/health/article/0,8599,2006397,00.html>