TOTOWA BOROUGH PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Head Lice Treatment

General Guidelines

- Treatment for head lice is recommended for persons diagnosed with an active infestation.
- All household members and other close contacts should be checked.
- ONLY those with evidence of an active infestation should be treated with an over the counter product.
- Do NOT use any pesticides as a preventative measure.
- You must treat the person AND environment.

General Information

- Head lice are wingless insects (parasite) about the size of a sesame seed (1/16 to1/8 of an inch).
    - They may be reddish brown, gray, white, golden brown, black or brown.
    - They live on the human scalp and feed off your blood; they DO NOT live on animals.
- Head lice can NOT hop, jump or fly, however they do crawl.
- The female louse (live bug) can lay as many as 150 eggs during its typical 30 day life span.
- Head lice can live up to 48 hours off a human head.
- The nits/eggs are small, oval, tear drop shaped and glued at an angle to the side of the hair shaft.
- Nits can be distinguished from dandruff because they are stuck like glue to the hair. Dandruff will easily blow off and DO NOT have that perfect tear drop shape.
- Adult head lice (live louse) do not like bright light and will move rapidly around the head to avoid the light. If you have an infestation of nits/eggs, you may never see the live louse.

Treating the Environment

Wash

- Machine wash and dry all recently used clothes, bed linens, throw pillows, stuffed animals, hair scrunches and towels in hot water (130 degrees Fahrenheit / 54.4 degrees Celsius) and dry on hottest cycle for at least 20 minutes.
- This should be done daily.

- Items that cannot be laundered may be dry-cleaned or sealed in a plastic bag for two weeks.

Vacuum

- All carpeting, upholstered furniture, mattresses, interior of cars and car seats.
    - You MUST throw vacuum bag away when done if you have a bag system.
    - You MUST sanitize the canister when done if you have a bag less system.

Treat the infested person(s):

1. Requires using an over-the-counter lice shampoo (consult your school nurse or family doctor /pharmacist)
2. Treat the hair following the label directions - ONLY USE ONCE (a second application may be applied 7-10 days after the first treatment)
3. Nit combs, found in lice medicine packages or the metal nit combs (sold separately), **MUST** be used to comb nits and lice from the hair shaft.

- Any nits remaining on the hair shaft **MUST** be pulled off each strand of hair by hand. - **The shampoo treatment doesn't remove nits/eggs; you MUST comb, inspect and pull off by hand.**

4. Checking the hair and combing it with a metal nit comb will decrease the chance of self-reinfestation.
5. If you miss removal of just one nit/egg it can hatch, then multiply and the person is infested all over again, and the cycle will continue.
6. Please check the instructions regarding retreatment, most recommend a second treatment 7-10 days after the first application.
7. On DAILY basis inspect your child for the next 4 weeks.
8. Inspect all other family members for the next 4 weeks.
9. DO NOT use the RID or NIX as a preventative measure. - These products are toxic and only work on live head lice (insect).

THESE TREATMENTS ONLY WORK ON LIVE HEAD LICE (INSECT/PARASITE)
THEY DO NOT REMOVE NITS/EGGS – YOU MUST PULL OFF THE NITS

Prevent Reinfestation

- Avoid head-to-head (hair-to-hair) contact during play and other activities at home, school, and elsewhere (sports activities, playground, slumber parties, and camp).
- Lice are spread most commonly by direct head-to-head (hair-to-hair) contact and by sharing clothing or belongings onto which lice or nits may have crawled or fallen.
- Do not share clothing such as hats, scarves, coats, sports uniforms, hair ribbons, or barrettes, head phones, head gear or helmets, pillows and blankets.
- Do not share combs, brushes, or towels. / Do not lie on beds, couches, pillows, rugs, carpets, or stuffed animals.

Over-the-counter Medications

RID (Pyrethrins) Pyrethrins are safe and effective when used as directed. Pyrethrins can only kill live lice, not unhatched eggs (nits). A second treatment is recommended in 9-10 days to kill any newly hatched lice before they can produce new eggs.

Nix (Permethrin lotion 1%) Permethrin is safe and effective when used as directed. Permethrin kills live lice but not unhatched eggs. Permethrin may continue to kill newly hatched lice for several days after treatment. A second treatment often is necessary in 9-10 days to kill any newly hatched lice before they can produce new eggs.