

The Newburyport Public School Nurses Top 10 Facts about Lice

School nurses are supportive advocates who will help you obtain lice treatment and use it properly. School nurses will assist you in checking or rechecking as you work to remove nits and lice from your child's head. Just ask.

School nurses will not judge you or report you or tell others if you ask for assistance dealing with head lice. We handle lice in a confidential manner. We know that even the best families can catch them, and most of us who are parents have been through it at least once ourselves.

1. Lice are not easy to catch- *Lice are spread primarily by head-to-head contact. They are much harder to get than a cold, flu, conjunctivitis, strep throat, or impetigo.*

2. Lice are not often passed via hats and helmets- *While this is possible, it is rare. Hairbrushes, pillows, and sheets are much more common modes of transmission. A louse on a hat or coat is a dying louse and is not capable of reproducing.*

3. School is not a common place for lice transmission- *School is a VERY RARE source of transmission. Much more common are family members, overnight guests, and playmates that spend a large amount of time together.*

4. Poor hygiene does not contribute to lice- *Lice like actually like clean hair more than dirty. Head Lice are not a source of infection or disease; they are simply a nuisance.*

5. Lice cannot jump or fly from one person to another- *Lice can only crawl.*

6. Any nits left in the hair will not necessarily cause the lice to come back- *Any nits farther away than one quarter inch to half an inch on the hair shaft are already hatched and pose no risk to others.*

7. Eggs or nits cannot fall out of the hair, hatch, and cause lice in another person- *Nits are cemented to the hair and very hard to remove. They cannot fall off. Newly hatched larvae must find a head quickly or they will die. Removing the nits (eggs) with a fine tooth comb is time-consuming but the most effective way to get rid of lice. They do not wash out of hair.*

8. Lice do not live a long time off of a human head- *Lice live only 1 to 2 days off the head and if they are off the human head they are dying lice not capable of reproducing.*

9. All members of a family do not need to be treated if one person has lice- *Only the person with lice should be treated. Lice shampoos are INSECTICIDES and can be dangerous if used incorrectly or too frequently.*

10. Checking a classroom when one student has lice does not prevent lice from spreading – *Classroom transmission is EXCEEDINGLY RARE and a waste of valuable teaching time. Checking family members and close playmates is much more appropriate.*