



Box Elder School District

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Dear Parent:

We seem to be at the peak of head lice season. To correct the enormous amount of misinformation about head lice, here are some important facts and tools that will help you detect and combat lice if they should infest your child. We also encourage you to check your child(ren) for lice.

What are head lice?

- Head lice are tiny, wingless, bloodsucking insects that feed on the human scalp.
- They do not infest animals.
- They cannot live away from the human host longer than 20 hours.
- They do not fly or jump.
- They infest people regardless of social and ethnic status.
- They are not an indication of poor hygiene or parental neglect. In fact, lice prefer clean, well-kept hair.

Where do head lice come from?

- Head lice crawl from one head to another.
- The most common method of transfer is by direct head contact between two children.
- Transfer can also occur through shared combs, brushes, hats, clothing, and bedding (including pillows).
- Places a person can get head lice include day care centers, babysitters' houses, relative's houses, dance/gym class, movie theaters, slumber parties, church and church activities, and any other place there is direct contact with another person's head.

How do you know if your child has head lice?

- Examine your child weekly to catch an infestation as early as possible. (An infestation is live bugs; nits (eggs) are not necessarily a sign of infestation.)
- Examine your child's head in bright lighting.
- Work in small areas (about 1 inch), parting the hair with a comb, to look for eggs attached to the hair near the scalp.
- Scratching can be a symptom, however often there are no symptoms.

What is the treatment for head lice?

Medicated shampoos, creams, or gels kill lice but these are to be used along with several steps of cleaning to assure their elimination. Please read and understand the instructions on treatment. These medications are not recommended for children under age 2. People should not use these pediculicides unless they have lice. If you have questions, ask your pharmacist.

How concerned should you be?

There is no reason to panic. Unfortunately this is a fairly common problem. It is a nuisance and inconvenience, but lice do not cause disease or other health problems. **A lice infestation concern is made worse when parents and teachers over react creating unkindness and mistreatment among children.** Handling the problem responsibly according to accepted guidelines is the best response to a lice infestation.

Box Elder School District School Nurses
