

**Standish Parks & Recreation**  
**HEAD LICE DETECTION & TREATMENT**  
**(revised 7/2016)**

A new case of head lice was recently reported by a parent of a child in our program. I am sending this information home to assist you in identifying head lice on your child.

Head lice are tiny wingless insects that lay eggs, or nits, on the hair shaft close to the head. Check your child's scalp in good light. Use of a comb or applicator sticks to separate the hair is also helpful. Nits may look like dandruff but they do not brush or flake off since they are cemented to the hair. Often you will find them behind the ear and at the nape of the neck. The louse is harder to detect. They are only 1-3 mm long, are grayish-white to reddish-brown and can move quickly in the hair. They do not fly, hop or jump. They do not live on animals, just humans.

**If you find nits or lice in your child's head, contact your Program Director.** Permethrin 1% (Nix) is currently the recommended treatment of choice by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) for newly diagnosed cases of head lice. Occasionally, head lice can be resistant to medication. If you still see bugs after treatment, coat the hair with a mixture of mayonnaise, and olive oil, cover the head with a shower cap and leave this on overnight. Wash this oily emulsion out with green Dawn dish detergent and vinegar. Use this treatment 4 nights in a row **\*\***(see alternative treatment using Cetaphil Cleanser below).**\*\*** After treatment, remove the nits with a comb or your fingernails. Wash bedding and clothing in hot water and dry in a hot dryer. Vacuum carpets and upholstered furniture. Those items that cannot be laundered (including stuffed animals) should be sealed in a plastic bag for 14 days. Continue checking your child's head daily for a few weeks.

School is not the most common place where head lice are spread. Sleepovers among friends and relatives are a common way they are passed from home to home. Summer camp is another frequent site for transmission. They can also spread from sharing baseball/softball helmets. ***If you find nits in your child's head it means they have had head lice for a minimum of 10 days.*** A female louse lays approximately 10 eggs, or nits in a day. The nits are incubated by body heat and hatch in 10 to 14 days.

**Please notify the Recreation Department if you find head lice on your child.**

Anyone can get head lice. An infestation does not indicate poor hygiene. Your communication is essential in controlling head lice at our program. Thanks for helping us deal with this public health nuisance.

**Head Lice Facts**

- Head lice are tiny, wingless parasitic insects that live in the hair and scalp.
- The female adult lays up to 6 eggs (nits) and deposits them with "cement" to the base of the hair shaft (within ¼ " of the scalp).
- Nits hatch in 7-10 days and the female is able to lay eggs 10 days later.
- They have a 30-day life span.
- They will die if they do not have a "blood meal" within 48 hours.
- They **do not** jump or fly; they cannot live on pets.
- Head lice **are passed primarily through direct head-to-head contact with an infested person.** Less likely, they are spread by sharing combs/brushes, headbands, clothing, helmets, etc.; by sharing bedding, towels, pillows, stuffed animals, etc.
- Signs and symptoms: Itching of the scalp, particularly around the ears and nape of the neck; visually, by finding crawling lice or nits on the hair shaft.

## PEDICULOSIS (HEAD LICE) PROCEDURE

### Initial Management

#### **If live lice are found on a student in the After School Program:**

- The student will be discreetly asked to go to the Program Director's office.
- Parents will be called to pick up their child. Treatment methods will be recommended.
- Student will be excluded from the recreation program until treatment has occurred.
- Siblings will also be examined.
- Recreation staff will examine child's head when student returns:
  - If live lice are found, student cannot be readmitted.
  - If some nits are present, student may remain in the program.

#### **If nits are found on a student:**

- Child's parent will be called to initiate treatment, but it is not necessary to isolate immediately. Child may stay in the program until a parent is able to arrive for pick up.
- Child will be examined by staff upon return to the program.

#### **If a parent calls to report an infestation:**

- Appropriate treatment, as recommended by family physician or school nurse must be done. See below for recommended treatment.
- Student will be examined by staff before readmission.

### Procedure for Treating Pediculosis (Head Lice) at Home

**If evidence of head lice is found (live bugs or nits close to the scalp) the following process should be used to eliminate them.**

- **Use a pediculicide** such as Nix or Rid. Follow the directions exactly as printed on the box.
- **No pediculicides are 100% effective in killing the nits (eggs).** It is recommended that the nits closest to the scalp be removed by hand as they are the most likely to survive the treatment.
- Occasionally head lice are resistant to pediculicides. If you still see bugs after treatment, coat the hair with a mixture of mayonnaise and olive oil, cover the head with a shower cap and leave this on overnight. Wash this oily emulsion out with green Dawn dish detergent and vinegar. Use this treatment 4 nights in a row. After daily treatment, remove the nits with a comb or your fingernails.
- Examine and treat all family members that have evidence of live lice and/or eggs.
- **Disinfect the household** each time you treat the infested person(s).
  - Wipe down all (non-cloth) surfaces with a damp cloth.
  - Wash linens, clothing, hats, and/or hair accessories in hot water (130 degrees) with detergent and dry using high heat for at least 20 minutes.
  - Place all clothing, linens, stuffed animals, etc. that cannot be washed in a sealed bag for 2 weeks.
  - Wash combs, brushes, barrettes and other non-machine washable hair accessories in a bowl of hot, soapy water (130 degrees F).
  - Vacuum furniture, floors and car upholstery thoroughly.
  - Chemical insecticide sprays are NOT recommended.

## **\*\* DIRECTIONS FOR USE OF THE CETAPHIL LICE TREATMENT \*\***

- Cetaphil Gentle Skin Cleanser
- Applicator bottle, such as the plastic bottles hair dye comes in
- A regular hair comb (must be fairly sturdy, as the lotion is very thin)
- A wide toothed comb (for thick or longer hair, to keep it untangled)
- Towel
- Hair clips for sectioning hair

### **Method**

Start with dry hair and cover your shoulders with a towel. (Cetaphil is very thick so you won't have much dripping) Use a METAL lice comb to comb out as many nits as possible before you start. Section your hair of in very small sections; it's extremely important that you coat every strand of hair, and apply the Cetaphil directly to your scalp at each part you make in your hair so that you lessen the chance of missing even ONE louse on your head! Use Cetaphil liberally and massage, massage, massage it in. Even ONE louse left uncoated may survive to reproduce.

Once you are sure you have covered every strand of hair and every inch of scalp, use a regular (but sturdy comb) to begin combing out the excess lotion. You may need to use a wide toothed comb first, if your hair is thick or very long. Comb until you have removed as much of the excess Cetaphil as possible. Once that is done, use a hair dryer to dry your hair. (Use the most powerful hair dryer you have, as the drying process can take up to three times longer than drying after a shower – this is the only really time consuming part of the process, as the Cetaphil takes much, much longer to dry than water.)

What will happen is that the Cetaphil will dry on your head, hair and most importantly on the lice, cutting off their source of oxygen, therefore smothering them. (In a sense, they will be 'shrink wrapped'.) Lice can literally survive for hours without breathing, so this must be left on the hair for a minimum of 8 hours. This can be done before bed, so that the 'smothering' process can take place during sleep. You must make SURE that your hair is completely dry in order for the lice to be totally encased in the dried Cetaphil, and therefore be unable to breathe.

After 8 hours, wash and dry your hair normally. Use the metal lice comb once again, to comb out any surviving live nits. For best results, you must repeat this treatment three times in one-week intervals to make sure that newly hatching lice do not survive to begin the hatching/reproducing cycle again.