

LOUSEOLOGY 101



Tamalpais Valley School

This program is for general information only. Consult your pediatrician with any specific questions or concerns about exposure to or treatment of lice.

THE NEED FOR EDUCATION

- So that we may better work together as a community to minimize lice infestation at Tam Valley School
- Tam Valley PTA has pulled from various medical and scientific resources to bring you “Louseology 101.”



TOPICS OF DISCUSSION



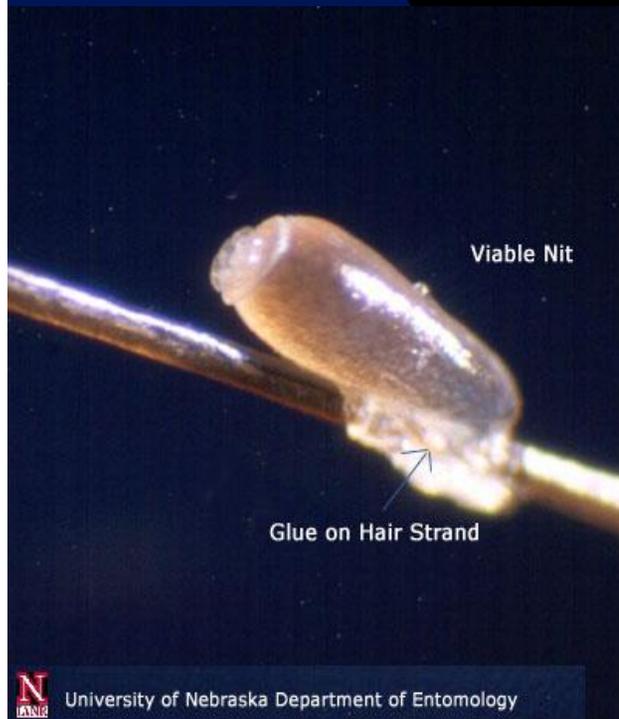
- What are Lice
- Know your Nits
- Louse Life Cycle
- How will I know?
- At-Home Lice Checks
- Treatment Option
- Treatments - What to do:
 - ◆ Keep your wits not your nits!
 - ◆ Treating your house
- Reminders
- Sources & Websites

WHAT ARE LICE?



- Adult head lice are whitish, grey or brown insects that are about 1-3mm in length.
- Adult head lice do not fly or jump - they are wingless and do not have back legs. They have six “front” legs and move through hair by climbing.
- Lice are spread by direct contact (head-to-head) and possibly by indirect contact (hats, etc.)
- Lice cannot survive off a human head for more than 24-48 hours.

KNOW YOUR NITS



- Female lice attach eggs (“nits”) to the shaft of the hair near the scalp.
- Nits are smaller than a pinhead and are very often mistaken for flakes of dry skin or other hair debris.
- Nits are securely stuck to the hair and you won’t be able to remove them with your fingers.

LOUSE LIFE CYCLE



 University of Nebraska Department of Entomology

- Nits hatch after about 7-10 days - the young lice are called “nymphs.”
- Empty egg shells remain attached to the hair after the nymphs are hatched.
- After about 10 days, nymphs become adults and are capable of laying new eggs.

HOW WILL I KNOW?



- Itching of the scalp is usually the first sign of a lice infestation - commonly behind the ears, at the nape of the neck, and along the lower hairline.
- Upon closer inspection, you may see nits near the scalp or lice moving through the hair.
- Perform regular lice checks to ensure early detection!

AT-HOME LICE CHECK

- Put on gloves and position child under good light.
- Begin at the nape of the neck, work your way along the lower hairline, and then move through the rest of the hair.
- Using either your fingers or lice-check sticks, part the hair into sections and check for adult lice or nits on the hair shaft.
- Remember: **Nits will be firmly attached to the hair shaft.** You will not be able to blow it away or pull it away with your fingers.
- Continue to check sections of the hair until satisfied there are no adult lice or nits present.
- If you discover adult lice or nits, follow appropriate notification procedures and treatment guidelines.

TREATMENT OPTIONS

- If you discover an infestation, check ALL members of the household and treat only if live lice or nits are seen.
- Consult pediatrician or family physician if this is the first infestation or if you have any questions/concerns about treatment.
- Over-the-counter treatments containing **PYRETHRIN** (such as Rid) will kill only live lice and requires treatment 7-10 days later to kill any newly matured lice. Products containing **PERMETHRIN** (such as Nix) will kill both nits and lice for several days after treatment. *The California Department of Public Health suggests treatment with products containing PERMETHRIN. Follow all product directions carefully.*
- The California Department of Public Health suggests that alternative treatment measures using herbal remedies or oils are not effective.
- Treatment shampoos will loosen the “glue” used to affix nits to hair and every attempt should be made to remove all nits manually after treatment. Continue to check and remove nits for the next week!

WHAT TO DO: KEEP YOUR WITS NOT YOUR NITS!

- Wet hair and seat child in chair in well-lighted area.
- Separate out a small section of hair. Using a lice-comb or other fine-toothed comb (metal combs work best), comb sections from scalp to end. Rinse comb in bowl of water to remove nits. Repeat until all nits and lice are removed from section then twist section and pin to head.
- Continue to work in small sections until entire head has been combed and checked for lice and nits.
- Combing should be done daily for the first week and then every 2-3 days over a two-week period to ensure removal of all nits.
- Check ALL members of the family daily for at least a week!

WHAT TO DO: TREATING THE HOUSE

- Wash all bed linens and clothing that has been in contact with the child in the past few days, using the hot water cycle in the water and the high-heat setting on the dryer.
- Stuffed animals and pillows can be put in the dryer on high-heat for 20-25 minutes or set aside for 48 hours. Items may also be dry cleaned.
- Disinfect combs and brushes.
- Vacuum floors and furniture. Throw vacuum bag or contents of vacuum container away immediately.
- You may wish to vacuum inside of car and car seat.
- There is no evidence that “anti-lice” room sprays are effective.

WHAT TO DO: SCHOOL NOTIFICATION

- Call the Tam Valley School Absence Hotline and leave a message letting office know that you have discovered lice.
- Office will forward and exposure notice to your room parent for distribution to classroom families. Families will be instructed to check all family members daily for at least a week and to notify office if anything is found. Teacher will also be notified.
- Office DOES NOT identify the child in any communications.
- Tam Valley does not conduct all-school lice checks. Classroom checks will ONLY be conducted in extraordinary cases and ONLY at the discretion of office staff.

A FEW REMINDERS

- Lice do not carry disease or sickness and are not considered a “health risk” by the medical community.
- Lice can affect anyone!
- Immediate notification of the school, sport teams, families of playmates, or others who may have been exposed is essential to the control of infestation.
- Thorough and continued removal of lice and nits is essential for treatment. Most “re-infestations” are actually a continuation of the original problem due to inadequate treatment.
- The Mill Valley School District does not have a “no-nit” policy. Students will be allowed backed back in school after initial treatment.

SOURCES

American Academy of Pediatrics www.aap.org

National Institutes of Health www.nih.gov

California Department of Public Health www.cdph.ca.gov

School Nurse Association www.nasn.org

Harvard School of Public Health www.hsph.harvard.edu

University of Nebraska Dept. of Entomology www.lancaster.unl.edu



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