

General Information About Head Lice

Fulton County Schools takes pride in insuring the **safe** and well-being of our students and staff. As we begin the school year, we want to make sure that we work diligently to control the transmission of lice as well as other potential communicable diseases.

Head lice are very common amongst school-aged children and are not a cause for alarm, but to control its spread, we (the school and parents) must be diligent with our efforts. **PLEASE NOTE: this is for information only and not meant as a substitute for medical advice.**

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF HEAD LICE INCLUDE:

- Tickling feeling of something moving in the hair.
- Itching, caused by an allergic reaction to the bites of the head louse.
- Irritability and difficulty sleeping (head lice are most active in the dark)
- Sores on the head caused by scratching. These sores can sometimes become infected with bacteria found on the person's skin.

WAYS TO PREVENT HEAD LICE INCLUDE:

- Avoid head-to-head (hair-to-hair) contact during play and other activities at home, school, and elsewhere (sports activities, playground, slumber parties, camp);
- Do not share clothing such as hats, scarves, coats, sports uniforms, hair ribbons, or barrettes;
- Do not share combs, brushes, or towels. Disinfest combs and brushes used by an infested person by soaking them in hot water (at least 130°F) for 5-10 minutes;
- Do not lie on beds, couches, pillows, carpets, or stuffed animals that have recently been in contact with an infested person;
- Machine wash and dry clothing, bed linens, and other items that an infested person wore or used during the 2 days before treatment using the hot water (130°F) laundry cycle and the high heat drying cycle. Clothing and items that are not washable can be dry-cleaned OR sealed in a plastic bag and stored for 2 weeks;
- Vacuum the floor and furniture, particularly where the infested person sat or lay. However, spending much time and money on housecleaning activities are not necessary to avoid re-infestation by lice or nits that may have fallen off the head or crawled onto furniture or clothing;
- Do not use fumigant sprays or fogs; they are not necessary to control head lice and can be toxic if inhaled or absorbed through the skin.

If you suspect your child has head lice, please contact or see a health provider and notify the school's health clinic. It is important to continuously examine your child's hair every day for at least two weeks because nits can live up to two weeks. Head lice can easily be confused with other health conditions and a formal diagnosis **is** preferred before treatment is administered. If the school suspects your child has head lice, you will be notified and will be asked to seek treatment for your student before he/she can return to school.

Please know the schools will also implement measures to minimize and prevent outbreaks. However, appropriate strategies will be implemented consistent with the best way to eradicate the problem.

We hope this information is helpful in keeping your child free of this problem.

Additional resources are available at: www.cdc.gov/lice/head/ or www.headlice.org.