

WALTER T. BERGEN MIDDLE SCHOOL

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Dear Parent(s)/Guardian:

School children are particularly susceptible to infestation of pediculosis due to their close contact with peers, and through the sharing of clothing and personal items. The most common source of infestation is through direct personal contact with an infested individual. Environmental items which may harbor lice and eggs (nits) such as combs, brushes, hats, clothing, hair accessories, towels, bedding, upholstered furniture, stuffed animals and carpets are also other sources of infestation. Children who have pediculosis usually display the following symptoms: (1) itching often accompanied by scalp irritation such as scratches and rash, (2) the presence of ova (egg-nits) firmly attached to the base of individual hairs.

Careful inspection of the child's hair and scalp, with particular attention given to the nape of the neck, crown of the head, and above and behind the ears, is the best way to detect signs of infestation. The nits may be more easily recognized by examining in good light (sunlight) or by shining a light on the child's scalp during the examination. If pediculosis is detected or suspected, consult with your physician for prompt treatment of the child and of the environment to prevent re-infestation. Family members or other close contacts should also be examined to control the spread of infestation. If your child has pediculosis notify close contacts including other programs/school your child and siblings may attend.

Early detection and prompt treatment are essential in attempting to control the spread of pediculosis. Students must not attend school until treatment (individual and environment) has been completed, including removal of nits. Regular examination, throughout the school year, of your child's hair and scalp will be helpful and greatly appreciated by all. Items which cannot be washed or dry-cleaned may be sealed in plastic bags for two or three weeks. You may also wish to provide a plastic bag labeled with your child's name for outerwear (i.e. jackets, hats) as an environmental classroom control measure. Articles of clothing such as art aprons must also be laundered.

If pediculosis is discovered, contact your physician for treatment of the infested individual and environment. Head lice are human parasites about 1/6" in size and may appear grayish or brown after feeding. They do not jump or fly. They do, however, crawl and can move quickly. The adult female louse may lay 3-4 nits in a day. Nits may hatch in approximately 8-10 days repeating the cycle of infestation.

If you have further questions, please contact your health care professional (physician, pharmacist, or school nurse).

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,



MaryLou DeMaria Berhang, RN, BSN, CSN