



Penn Manor School District
Health Services
PO Box 1001, Millersville, PA 17551-0301

To: Parents and Guardians

From: School Health Services

At different times in the year, head lice are found among our student population. Lice are parasites that have been around for as long as people can remember. Anyone can get lice. They are not associated with disease, but can be difficult to destroy, and treatments can be costly and result in missed work and school time. In addition, there is evidence that they are becoming resistant to current treatments, much like bacteria become resistant to antibiotics. Head lice are generally spread by direct, head to head contact with a person who is infested with live lice. Avoiding head to head contact is the best prevention. If your child's head itches, check for lice! You may also wish to do the following:

- Teach your children not to use a comb, brush, hat or towel that belongs to someone else.
- Once a week check the heads of all of your family members for lice and eggs (nits).

Lice are grayish-white or light brown insects that crawl on or near the scalp. They are one-eighth to one-fourth inch in length. Lice require a food source to survive, sucking blood from the scalp, which can cause itching and a tickling sensation. An unknown number of nits remaining on the hair after the first treatment will hatch into lice within a week to 10 days. For this reason, **it is very important to apply a second treatment in 7-10 days to kill any newly hatched lice.**

The eggs or nits are teardrop-shaped and are firmly attached to the hairs, usually within one-half inch of the scalp. They do not flick off, and therefore, can be distinguished from dandruff.

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics (2010) Clinical Report on Head Lice, "No-nit policies for return to school should be abandoned." **If you find nits or live lice on your child's head and need advice about treatment, your school nurse will be able to advise you. You may also wish to consult your doctor or a pharmacist. Upon returning to school, the student must report to the school nurse's office with a parent/guardian or parent/designee so that a school nurse or HRT may confirm that the student is free from live lice.** The nurse maintains confidentiality. If live lice are still present, the parent/guardian will be asked to take the student home and treatment procedures will be reviewed. If live lice are present after several treatments, the parents will be advised to contact their physician for advice.

Per AACP (2010) "Head lice screening programs have not been proven to have a significant effect over time on the incidence of head lice in the school setting and are not cost effective. Parent education programs may be helpful in the management of head lice in the school setting."

Information about lice and treatment for lice can also be found at the following sites:

<http://www.cdc.gov/parasites/lice/>

http://pa.gov/portal/server.pt/community/diseases_and_conditions

www.pediatrics.org/cgi/doi/10.1542/peds.2010-1308