

Dear Parents:

Head lice have been reported, again. The children with head lice are excluded from school for treatment and removal of the nits (eggs). Children will be checked upon returning to school. If treatment is not satisfactory, all nits and eggs removed, they will not be readmitted.

Please check your child's hair regularly or call Illanka Health Center at 3622, the Public Health Nurse at #4547 or the Hospital at #8000. When you look closely at the scalp and see small, whitish eggs firmly attached to the hair shaft, you have found head lice nits. Dandruff can easily be removed from the hair while eggs are not easily removed by pulling.

Head lice are becoming increasingly common in Alaska. They may be transmitted directly from person to person or indirectly through objects such as hair brushes, caps, scarves, coats, sheets and pillow cases. Away from people, head lice can live for only about 48 hours; the eggs can live away from people for about 10 days, but will not hatch at room temperature or below.

Current research indicates that lice and their nits are becoming more resistant to available pediculicides (shampoos). Reinfestation may occur if only one viable nit remains on the hair shaft. All nits must be removed from the hair in order to readmit your child to school.

STEPS TO ERADICATE HEAD LICE

TREATMENT

1. Shampoo with RID, NIX or other pediculicide (lice shampoo).
IMPORTANT – Follow directions on the package insert or physicians recommendation. Rinse hair with a conditioner.
2. Launder bed linen and clothing in hot, soapy water – no special additives are necessary. Close attention is necessary for hoods, caps, and hats. Machine dry items on the hot cycle for 20 min.
3. All combs and brushes should be soaked in a pediculicidal shampoo for 1 hour or boiled in water for 5-10 minutes.
4. Comb out snarls and tangles with a regular comb – this is an important procedure which facilitates nit removal.
5. Separate one inch of hair and place teeth of the comb as close to the scalp as possible. Move comb away from the scalp, passing through the same strands of hair several times. Repeat this procedure on remaining hair until the entire head is completed. Constant inspection for nits is advisable.
6. Combing through dry hair is easier and preferable to damp combing.
7. Vacuum rugs, upholstered furniture and mattresses.
8. Inspect all family members for at least 2 weeks.

PREVENTION

1. Shampoo hair regularly with ordinary shampoo and water and periodically check your child's head.
2. Do not share combs, towels, hats, caps, pillows, or clothing.
3. CHILDREN WILL BE EXCLUDED FROM SCHOOL IF LICE OR NITS ARE PRESENT.
4. Children may return to school immediately after treatment and nit removal.