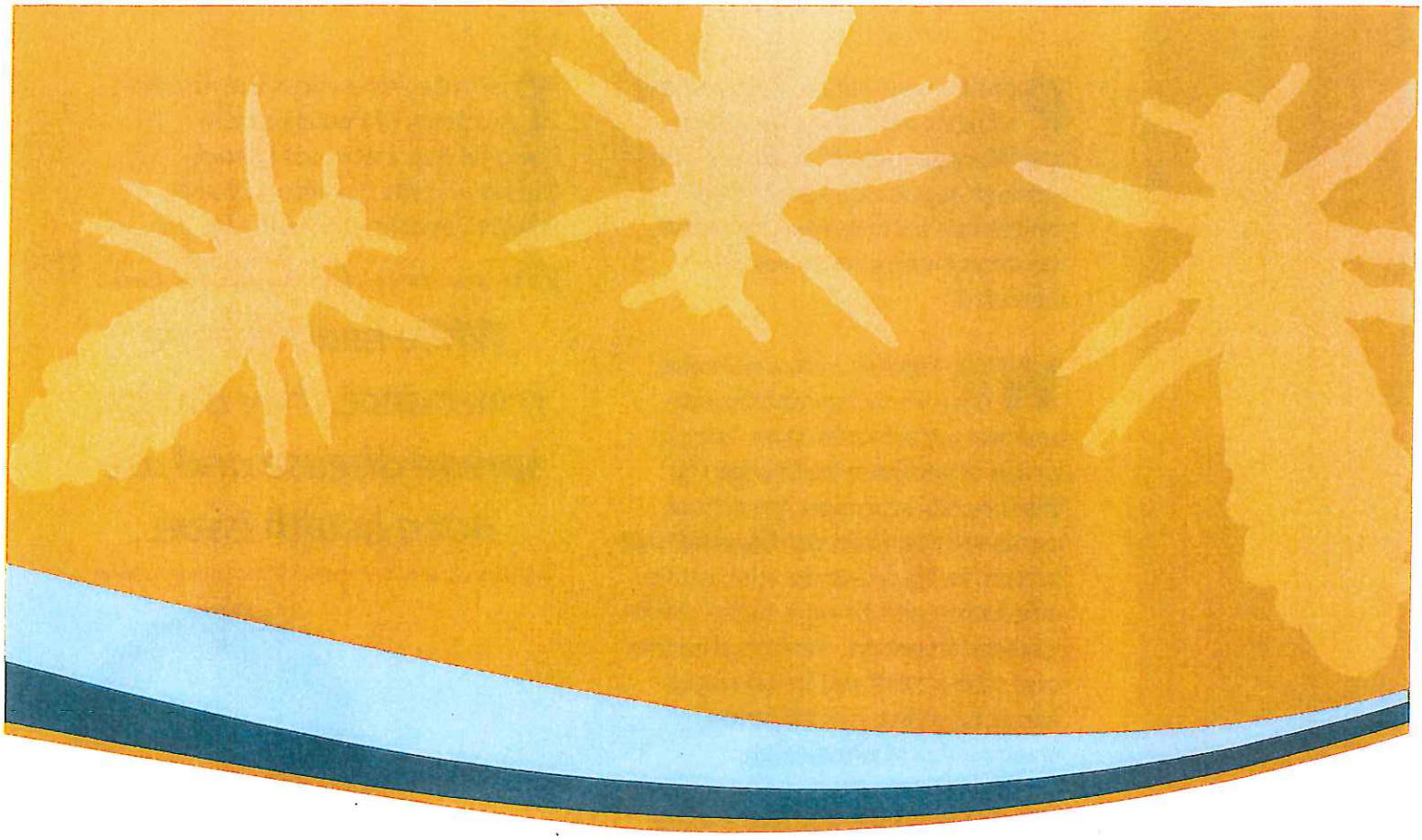

Centerville-Abington Community Schools Parent Information Packet on Lice

Parents have prime responsibility of assisting in the prevention and management of head lice cases through regular checks of their child's hair and starting immediate treatment when head lice are detected.

While head lice are a nuisance, they do not spread disease and are not a health issue. Should a case of head lice be brought to the school's attention, the school nurse will maintain confidentiality at school, verify presence of an active infestation and bring it to the child's parents' attention. Parents, students and school staff will be educated about head lice identification, treatment and prevention.

If at all possible, students should not be excluded from school for having head lice, as the management of head lice should not disrupt the educational process of the child. The need to exclude students from school will be determined on a case by case basis.

This policy references the American Academy of Pediatrics, the National Association of School Nurses and the Wayne County Health Department Head Lice polices.

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Here are some basic facts about head lice:

- Head lice are small parasitic insects that do not come from out of the air or from the ground. They are human parasites and have probably been around since the beginning of time.
- Head lice have been found on people of all socio-economic levels.
- Personal hygiene or cleanliness in the home or school has nothing to do with getting head lice.
- Children, particularly those of elementary school age, are most likely to get head lice because of their close contact with each other.
- The main symptom is itching of the head.
- There is no way to know where a child got head lice. Homes or schools do not get head lice – people do. Current research indicates that most lice infestations are rarely contracted in the school setting.

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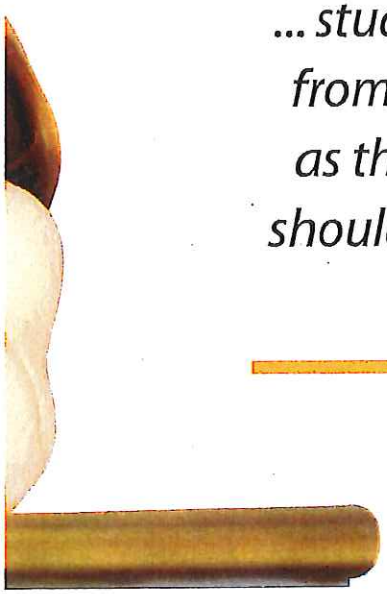

What do head lice look like?

There are three forms of lice: the egg (also called a nit), the nymph and the adult.

Nits are very small, about the size of a knot in thread, and hard to see. They are oval in shape, and usually yellow to white in color. They are laid by the adult female at the base of the hair shaft and are firmly attached with a glue-like substance. While nits take about one week to hatch, the ones that are likely to hatch are usually located within one fourth inch of the scalp. It is important not to confuse nits with dandruff, hair casts or other hair debris.

Nymphs are baby lice. They look like adult head lice, but are smaller in size. Nymphs mature into adults in about seven days after hatching. To live, the nymph must feed on human blood from the scalp.

Adult lice are about the size of a sesame seed and are tan to grayish-white in color. Females, which are usually larger than males, lay 3-5 eggs a day. The eggs hatch in 7-10 days and it takes another 7-10 days for the louse to mature and lay their own eggs. Adult lice can live up to 30 days on a person's head. To live, adult lice need to feed on human blood from the scalp, behind the ears and on the back of the neck. They do not have hind legs or wings and cannot jump or fly, but they can crawl rapidly. If the louse falls off a person, it dies within 2 days.

How are head lice spread?

Live head lice are spread through direct head-to-head contact with an infested person, but also by sharing hats, combs and other hair accessories. By the time an infestation is found, the child is likely to have had it for at least a month. A child cannot catch nits, as nits can be laid only by live lice. Head lice are not spread by animals.

Teach children not to share hats and grooming items (combs, hairbrushes, hair accessories, etc.) and to avoid direct head-to-head contact.

By the time an infestation is found, the child is likely to have had it for at least a month.

How to Treat Head Lice? Treatment Options.

Treatment consists of a 3-step process: use of a lice killing agent, nit removal, and environmental clean-up.

Step 1: Lice killing agents:

Prescription Option

Natroba™ (spinosad) Topical Suspension 0.9%. Natroba is the FDA-approved prescription head lice medication preferred by our school corporation. Ask your doctor if Natroba is right for your child. You can also visit, www.natroba.com for full prescribing information.

Other Options

Follow directions completely and thoroughly. Alternative treatments, such as with mayonnaise or olive oil, may be used. Some over-the-counter and prescription treatments may not be totally safe and scientifically proven to be 100% effective against head lice and nits.

If using an over-the-counter medication and live lice are found while nit combing; the product may be ineffective. Immediately contact your health care professional. Do not retreat sooner than 7-10 days later if live lice continue to survive.

Many lice shampoos kill only live bugs and may not kill the nits. Ask your health care professional for options.

If one family member has head lice, all household members should be checked.

Ask your doctor about prescription options available for your child.

Step 2: Nit removal:

THE BEST TREATMENT FOR REMOVING NITS IS MANUALLY.

Complete nit removal is the key to successful head lice treatment.

- Work in a well lighted area or use a flashlight and magnifying glass.
- Use a grooming comb or hairbrush to remove tangles. A hair detangler spray or other hair conditioner may aid in this process.
- Divide the hair into sections and fasten off the hair that is not being worked on.
- Go through each hair section from the scalp to the end of the hair. Nits are usually found close to the scalp.
- Sift through the same section of hair and look for attached nits and live lice. Use your fingers to pull off the nits.
- Move on to the next section until the entire scalp and all hair has been checked.
- Screen the infested person every day for 10 days and regularly thereafter.

Step 3: Environmental clean up:

- To kill lice on bedding, clothes, etc., wash in hot water and dry.
- Dry clean clothing that is not washable.
- Store clothing, stuffed animals, comforters, etc. that cannot be washed or dry cleaned into a plastic bag and seal for 2 weeks.
- Vacuum materials that cannot be washed (furniture, carpets).
- Pesticide sprays are NOT recommended, as they have not been proven to be effective and they are a health hazard.
- To kill lice on brushes, combs or hair accessories, soak them in hot water.