

HEADS UP! A Word about Head Lice

When children are in school, parents may have concerns about head lice exposure. Head lice continue to be one of the most common conditions among school-age children, and outbreaks are possible whenever and wherever children gather. Head lice are spread by close contact with a person who has active head lice, and less commonly, contact with infested personal items.

Symptoms of head lice include:

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

The Baltimore City Health Department has changed its head lice policy from "No Nit" to "No Live Lice", based on recommendations from the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the National Association of School Nurses. As a result, if a student is found to have live lice, the student will be excluded at the end of the school day (or earlier if needed). A consideration for the student to be readmitted will be made once appropriate treatment has started, and if there are no live lice found upon re-screening by school health staff.

To help prevent head lice from affecting your family, screen your child regularly (weekly if possible) and notify school health staff immediately if head lice or their nits (eggs) are found. We welcome the opportunity to teach you how to check your child for head lice.

Working together helps protect all of our children. Please contact the school nurse if you have any questions regarding this information.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Sincerely,



Shelly Choo, MD, MPH
Senior Medical Advisor
Baltimore City Health Department