



San Diego Uni
SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Dear Parents,

Lice is an unpleasant part of elementary school, and we need your cooperation to help keep the spread of lice to a minimum. Please read this letter to help us keep this pest from spreading and prevent further cases to help make the school a healthier place for everyone. The district policy states that a child found to have head lice must report to the nurses' office, and be treated at home. The next day it is mandatory to return to the health office, before the classroom, to be checked for any lice. For more information, check out the link below.

In this letter we hope to address misconceptions and provide guidance on how to avoid and treat head lice.

Misconception #1: Thoroughly washed hair does not have lice. FALSE. Lice actually thrive in clean hair. It has nothing to do with cleanliness, but exposure and treatment.

Misconception #2: Chlorine or dunking hair kills lice. FALSE. Lice can survive hours in a chlorinated pool, let alone a bathtub.

Misconception #3: Using a lice shampoo will rid my child of lice. FALSE. These shampoos may kill some lice, but are often toxic, and DO NOT kill the eggs (nits) that will eventually hatch and make more lice.

So what can you do if you get lice?

First things first: Take a deep breath and don't freak out if your child has head lice. Sure, they're gross (just talking about them can make your head itch), but they're not actually harmful to health. It's best to approach lice as a war on many fronts: You need to use a variety of techniques to kill not only adult lice, but also their tiny eggs (called nits), which are glued to the hair shaft. The nits can survive treatments that kill the adults and vice versa, (These bugs have evolved over a millennium to live in hair, so they're tricky).

It's best to steel yourself for weeks or months of vigilance since lice can reappear due to

repeated exposure or a missed nit. **No matter what kind of (lice-killing) product you use, combing is the key.** You cannot get rid of lice until you've picked every last egg.

Olive oil- This kitchen staple is thought to be an excellent smothering agent. Lice supposedly suffocate and die when the ooze plugs their breathing holes, but it needs to be applied overnight under a shower cap (about 12 hours) because lice can survive without breathing for hours. You'll also have to comb your hair to remove nits, but the olive oil should help loosen them from the hair shafts.

Comb, comb, comb – Comb out the child every day until they are free of nits and/or lice for 3 consecutive days. Coating the hair with conditioner beforehand makes it easier to comb and slows down any live lice. Those little plastic combs sold in kits don't do the trick. You need a very fine-toothed comb to pick them up. Here is a link to purchase one on Amazon(\$10):

LEVIA Nit-Free Terminator Comb - the Best Head Lice Comb on the Market! Get Rid of Lice & Nits Easily with this Professional Stainless Steel Comb. Full Lice & Nit Removal Is Crucial as Part of Any Head Lice Treatment.

https://www.amazon.com/dp/B00Q90UFIC/ref=cm_sw_r_em_awd_H-FxwbJ5VG4YW

We are also going to have some available for purchase at the nurses' office.

Another recommended kit can be found at Walgreens, called *Licefreee*

Remove lice or nits from the home: Clean items that have been in contact with infected family members' heads. Wash bedding, caps, scarves, and towels in hot water, and dry on a hot setting for 30min. Soak combs and brushes in very hot water. Vacuum floors, pillows, upholstered furniture and car seats. Stow non-washables – a treasured stuffed animal for example- in a sealed bag for 2 weeks.

Prevention – Advise your child to avoid head to head contact. Keep long hair in a tight ponytail or braid. Don't share combs, brushes, barrettes, hats, scarves or pillows. You can also add tea tree oil to your grooming products or even spritz on to your child's hair.

Spreading information and working together we can help rid our school of this nuisance. We appreciate your cooperation. Please contact nurse Ruthie Hill if you have any questions.

District Policy:

https://www.sandiegounified.org/sites/default/files_link/district/files/nursing/forms/Head_Lice_-_District_Policy.pdf

