

Head Lice- Information for Parents

If there are active cases of head lice in a child's classroom, parents and families are advised to watch for symptoms in their children. It is NOT recommended that parents use head lice treatments for prevention purposes on a child with no symptoms.

Head lice are not known to transmit any disease and therefore are not considered a health hazard. Children with head lice may not have symptoms at first, especially if there are not many lice. Itching is the most common symptom and is caused by an allergic reaction to louse bites. It may take 4–6 weeks for itching to appear the first time a person has head lice.

Other symptoms may include:

- a tickling feeling or a sensation of something moving in the hair;
- irritability and sleeplessness; and
- sores on the head caused by scratching. These sores caused by scratching can sometimes become infected with bacteria normally found on a person's skin.

Head lice are spread most commonly by direct head-to-head (hair-to-hair) contact. However, much less frequently they are spread by sharing clothing or belongings. The risk of getting infested by a louse that has fallen onto a carpet or furniture is very small.

To help prevent the spread of head lice:

- Avoid head-to-head (hair-to-hair) contact during play and other activities at home, school, and elsewhere (sports activities, playground, slumber parties, camp).
- Do not share clothing such as hats, scarves, coats, sports uniforms, hair ribbons, or barrettes.
- Do not share combs, brushes, or towels.