



A Parent's Guide to Head Lice Classroom Notification

Dear Parents and Guardians:

We have been informed that there is a case of head lice in your child's class. Although head lice can be inconvenient, they do not spread disease. Please check your child and family members for head lice.

[CDPH: Got Lice? Here's What You Need to Know About Head Lice](#)

What are head lice?

- Head lice are small insects that live in people's hair and feed on their blood. Lice glue their eggs or "nits" to hair so that the nits do not get brushed off.
- Head lice die quickly (within two days) without feeding so they cannot live very long away from your child's head.
- Nits take six to nine days to hatch, and seven or more days for the lice to become egg-laying adults.

How do people get head lice?

- People get head lice from head-to-head contact with a person who has head lice. Head lice contact occurs most often during family gatherings, play dates, sleepovers, camps, or even when taking selfies.
- Children are more likely to get lice from family members and playmates than from classmates at school.

How do I know if my child has lice?

- If you or your child have head lice, you may see nits stuck to the hair near the scalp and lice crawling through the hair.
- Nits should not be confused with dirt or dandruff in the hair, which can be easily brushed away.
- A person with head lice may have a tickling feeling in their hair or an itchy scalp. Intense scratching may also occur.
- Children may be irritable and have difficulty sleeping since head lice are most active at night.

[CDPH: Head lice and nits have been found in my hair or my child's hair. Now what?](#)

If your child has head lice, the best way to get rid of the lice is to comb their hair every day with a nit comb for **two weeks**. Comb the hair in-between treatments to remove nits. Use a metal (not plastic) nit comb that has long teeth – several brands are available at your local pharmacy.

- Check the hair of everyone in your household to see if they have head lice. Over-the-counter products and medications prescribed by a doctor are available to treat head lice. Not all products kill nits, and retreatment is often needed 7-10 days after the first treatment, when nits hatch and more head lice are found.



Treatments:

Permethrin or pyrethrin products are the most active ingredients in most over-the-counter products. The best active ingredient is permethrin (found in Nix cream rinse).

Very important treatment information:

- Follow the label directions carefully.
- Do not leave the product on for a longer time than recommended. It will not kill the lice faster.
- Treat only people who have head lice.
- Do not split a single box of shampoo or rinse between people.
- Even after treatment, you should remove nits **daily** with a metal nit or flea comb.
- Wait at least 7-10 days before treating someone for a second time if they still have lice.

What if the treatment did not work?

Here are a few reasons the treatment might not have worked:

- You did not follow the directions thoroughly.
- You did not remove all nits.
- The child got head lice again from a brother, sister, or playmate.
- Lice may not die right away.
- The problem was not lice.
- If permethrin or pyrethrin products do not work when used properly, you should talk to your doctor about the prescription options.

There is no proof the following products work:

- Vinegar
- Compounds that say they dissolve the glue on the nits "to ease their removal."
- Mayonnaise
- Olive oil
- Tea tree oil
- Lotions that "suffocate" lice

Here are a few other things you can do to get rid of the lice or nits in your home:

- Wash clothing, bedding, and other items used by the person with head lice in the 2 days before treatment in hot water (>130°F), then dry on the hottest heat cycle.
- Place combs, brushes, hair bands, and hair clips in hot water (>130°F) for 5-10 minutes.
- Vacuum carpets and furniture in areas where the person sat or laid down.

For additional information on head lice, please refer to the following websites:

- CDPH: [Head Lice: What You Need to Know](#)
- CDC: [Head Lice](#)
- [American Academy of Pediatrics: Head Lice](#)