

## Parent Information for Head Lice

Parents are the key to looking for and treating head lice. The Iowa Department of Public Health advises parents to spend 15 minutes each week on each child carefully looking for head lice or nits. Persons with nits within ¼ inch of the scalp OR live lice should be treated. Careful nightly use of a nit comb can potentially remove all lice and nits. Parents should teach children NOT to share hair accessories such as : hats, scarves, brushes, combs and hair fasteners. Students diagnosed with live head lice typically do not need to be sent home early from school, they can go home at the end of the day, be treated and return to class after appropriate treatment has begun. Nits may persist after treatment, but successful treatment should kill crawling lice.

Head lice can be a nuisance but they have not been shown to spread disease. Personal hygiene or cleanliness in the home or school has nothing to do with getting head lice.

Schools will not do mass screenings for head lice but instead will screen on an individual basis or by referral from parents/guardians, or school staff.

Families are responsible to carry out the treatment protocol including nit removal. It is also their responsibility to share information regarding lice exposure with school personnel and other close contacts as appropriate.

Only ordinary house cleaning, vacuuming and washing bedding and clothes in hot water are needed. No special effort or sprays are needed to clean your home. Only dead or dying lice are found on clothing, bedding or furniture.

For further information visit:

[www.idph.state.ia.us/adper/common/pdf/epi\\_manuel/lice.pdf](http://www.idph.state.ia.us/adper/common/pdf/epi_manuel/lice.pdf) or  
[www.cdc.gov/lice/head](http://www.cdc.gov/lice/head)

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Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

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