



Topeka Public Schools
Nursing Services
Head Lice

Effective July 16, 2007 the KDHE's Office of Surveillance & Epidemiology (OSE) has made changes to the Kansas Administrative Regulations (K.A.R. 28-1-1) relating to head lice treatment. The regulation states each student infested with lice shall be excluded from school until treatment with an antiparasitic drug is initiated. Kansas regulations no longer require children to be nit free before returning to school.

REVISED PROTOCOL

- 1) District staff or parent/guardian may refer the student to the nursing clinic for a head lice check.
- 2) A nursing services representative will check the student's head for live lice and nits (eggs). Finding a nymph or adult louse may be difficult as head lice can move quickly from searching fingers. If crawling lice are not seen, finding nits within a ½ inch of the scalp on the student's first clinic visit confirms that a person is probably infested and should be treated. Treatment with an antiparasitic hair product should also be applied when active lice are noted. In general when nits are more than ½ inch from the scalp the infestation is probably an old one and the student does not need to be treated with an antiparasitic hair product.
- 3) **When the head lice exam is positive:**
 - a) The parent/guardian is phoned requesting the student be taken home for treatment with an antiparasitic hair product. Nursing services will send a letter home to the parents/guardians.
 - b) Information on the head lice, treatment, and prevention will also be sent home. Parents/guardians will be encouraged to check their children's heads for lice on a weekly basis and remove all nits.
 - c) For those parents/guardians who cannot afford an antiparasitic drug, USD 501 will provide NIX without cost. Parents/guardians interested in receiving NIX will need to sign a written request.
 - d) Nursing services staff will check other students who were most likely to have had direct head-to-head contact (e.g. classroom, siblings) with the student has a positive head lice exam. If a sibling attends another 501 school the nursing services staff person at that school is notified to check the sibling.
 - e) As indicated parents/guardians will receive notification of head lice in the classroom encouraging home monitoring for head lice and treatment if appropriate.
- 4) Upon return to school a nursing services representative will recheck the student for live lice.
- 5) Whenever possible the parent/guardian will provide the school with proof of treatment (e.g. product packaging).
- 6) The student will be rechecked at various intervals to screen for additional nymph, adult louse and/or nits.
 - a) Nits are incubated by body heat and hatch in 7 to 14 days
 - b) Since nits are particularly resistant to some chemical treatments, a second treatment is often required about 7-10 days later to target the nymphs that hatch after the initial treatment.
 - c) Nymphs mature into adults about 7 – 12 days after hatching
 - d) If not treated, this life cycle may repeat itself every 3 – 4 weeks
- 7) When a student is sent home for repeated head lice infestations school personnel will work with the family to determine the assistance necessary, provide additional resources and instruction or refer to SRS as applicable. Students with chronic head lice may require weekly checks.
- 8) A team of two or three nursing services representatives will be sent to the building to do head checks on the entire student body when there is an outbreak of pediculosis in any given school or upon request from the principal. District staff will also be checked upon request.
- 9) Individual large plastic drawstring bags can be utilized by each classroom teacher for student's coat, sweater, jacket, hat and mittens and hung on their assigned hook in the cloakroom.

References:

CDC, Division of Parasitic Diseases Fact Sheet for the General Public: Head Lice Infestation. Revised August 18, 2005.
Kansas Administrative Regulations (KAR 28-1-1).
Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KAR 28-1-6) Article 1 - Diseases
Pollack, R.J. Harvard School of Public Health: Head Lice Information.