**Head Lice 101**

 Head lice are small, wingless insects which feed on human blood. They need human blood in order to survive.

 Head lice are about the size of sesame seeds.

 Head lice have six legs equipped with claws to grasp the hair.

 Head lice are crawling insects. They cannot hop, jump, or fly.

 Head lice do not thrive on pets.

 Head lice live for approximately 30 days on a host and a female louse may lay up to 100 nits (eggs).

 Head lice off of their human hosts will starve. Head lice will not survive for more than 24 hours off of its human host. Therefore head lice will not nest in household furniture.

 Nits (the eggs of the head louse) are small yellowish-white, oval-shaped eggs that are "to the side of a hair shaft glued" at an angle

 Nits must be laid by live lice. You cannot "catch nits."

 once laid, it takes 7-10 days for a nit to hatch, and another 7-10 days for the female to mature and begin laying her own eggs.

 Head lice are clear in color when hatched, then quickly develop a reddish-brown color after feeding.

Cases of head lice are gotten by close head to head contact usually from someone the child spends a lot of time with, outside of school, such as sleepovers/sharing brushes.

Once a child feels itching from the lice. The lice have been there approx. 3-5 weeks already.

If you find lice on your child. Please notify the school/school nurse and any other friends etc. your child has spent a lot of time with. This prevents re-infection.

  **How to treat Head Lice**

 **Don’t panic—Head lice are easy to get rid of if you follow the instructions.**

**Once live lice/nits have been identified you need to start a treatment plan.**

**Everyone in the family should be checked/along with friends and relatives who have spent a lot of time the person that has lice.**

(I have found lice to be resistant to many of the advertised treatments. These are the ones that have the active ingredient” permethrin” . Some of these products are RID, NIX and the generic brands of these that are usually a 10 min treatment.

This is what I recommend; it has been a successful treatment, if directions are followed.

(Lice Free) is a non-toxic treatment that is easy to use. It can be purchased at Hy Vee /Thrifty White. Comes in a gel or spray

Follow the instructions and use the metal comb diligently/daily for 2 weeks. Re-treat with Lice Free 8 days after first treatment. And to be safe, I would recommend a 3rd treatment, 8 days after the 2nd treatment.

Wash bedding/hat/coats, in hot water/dryer. Clean out hair brushes. There is no need to buy Lice spray for furniture/carpets/car upholstery. It’s a waste of money .Lice will not live off the body for more than 2 days.

If you have questions, please call me so I can help you through this process. Lea Ahrens RN 1-515-832-9220 w