

Information on Lice

On May 28, 2109, the Upper Moreland Township School District, voted to change Policy 236 Communicable Diseases and remove the language relating to lice. As a result, it is no longer mandatory that students will be removed from school as a result of head lice, nor will the nurse conduct classroom checks for lice when one student is identified as having lice. However, the nursing staff continues to have the discretion to send children home from school if they are found to have lice and are uncomfortable from itching or need immediate treatment.

What are lice?

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the head louse, or *Pediculus humanus capitis*, is a parasitic insect that can be found on the head, eyebrows, and eyelashes of people. Head lice feed on human blood several times a day and live close to the human scalp. Head lice are not known to spread disease.

Who is at risk for getting head lice?

Head lice are found worldwide. In the United States, infestation with head lice is most common among pre-school children attending child care, elementary schoolchildren, and the household members of infested children. Although reliable data on how many people in the United States get head lice each year are not available, an estimated 6 million to 12 million infestations occur each year in the United States among children 3 to 11 years of age. In the United States, infestation with head lice is much less common among African-Americans than among persons of other races, possibly because the claws of the of the head louse found most frequently in the United States are better adapted for grasping the shape and width of the hair shaft of other races.

Head lice move by crawling; they cannot hop or fly. Head lice are spread by direct contact with the hair of an infested person. Anyone who comes in head-to-head contact with someone who already has head lice is at greatest risk. Spread by contact with clothing (such as hats, scarves, coats) or other personal items (such as combs, brushes, or towels) used by an infested person is uncommon. Personal hygiene or cleanliness in the home or school has nothing to do with getting head lice.

Sources of Information:

- [Information on Lice from the School Nursing Staff](#)
- [Lice Information](#)
- [Detecting and Treating Lice](#)
- Helpful Websites:
 - [Healthy Children](#)
 - [CDC-Information on Lice](#)
 - [PA Department of Health](#)