

[Nurse name]
[School address]
[Phone]



Re: Possible Head Lice

[Current date]

Dear [parent or guardian name]:

As a school nurse, I see many head lice infestations. While there have been no reports of lice at your child's school at this time, I wanted to take a few moments to dispel some myths about head lice and who gets them.

Myth #1: Only dirty children get head lice.

False. Head lice infest children from all backgrounds and walks of life. Anyone can get head lice, no matter how clean their home or hair is, or where they live or go to school or play.¹

Myth #2: Head lice are dangerous.

False. Head lice do not carry any diseases. They may cause itching in those who are allergic to head louse bites, which may result in excessive scratching and a secondary skin infection.¹

Myth #3: Home remedies are an effective treatment for head lice.

False. If you think your child has head lice, it's best to talk with your doctor to confirm the diagnosis and get advice on appropriate treatments. Home remedies such as homeopathic shampoos, petroleum jelly, or mayonnaise have not been proven to get rid of head lice and may only prolong the infestation.¹

Here are a few other things you should know about lice:

- They cannot jump or fly. They are spread by head-to-head contact¹
- Head lice don't easily spread to pillows, furniture, stuffed animals, or clothes, but can remain on them for 1 to 2 days
- Head lice do not infest pets and pets do not spread head lice¹

A common approach to head lice treatment is to use an over-the-counter medication. While these treatments have been effective in the past, resistance to some over-the-counter head lice treatments has been reported in recent years.^{2,3} A 2016 study showed that head lice in 48 states may be resistant to many over-the-counter medications.⁴ Treatment failure may also be caused by incorrect use of the product, misdiagnosis of the original condition, or re-infestation.² Therefore, I recommend that in the case of a lice infestation, you call your doctor to discuss treatment options.

I am here to help you in any way I can. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can answer any questions or provide you with additional information.

Sincerely,
[Name]

References

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Frequently asked questions (FAQs). http://cdc.gov/parasites/lice/head/gen_info/faqs.html. Accessed May 31, 2016.
2. Burkhart CG. Relationship of treatment-resistant head lice to the safety and efficacy of pediculicides. *Mayo Clin Proc.* 2004;79(5):661-666.
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4. Gellatly KJ, Krim S, Palenchar DJ, et al. Expansion of the knockdown resistance frequency map for human head lice (phthiraptera: pediculidae) in the United States using quantitative sequencing. *J Med Entomol.* 2016:1-7.

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