

THIEF RIVER FALLS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Quick Facts About Head Lice

- It's estimated that between 6 million-12 million head lice infestations occur every year in the US in children between the ages of 3-12 years.
- Lice are transmitted via *direct, prolonged, and close head-to-head contacts*, such as during a sleepover or close cuddling.
- Lice do not jump, fly, run, or hop. They do not have wings.
- ***Transmission of head lice in the school setting is unlikely.***
- A child with an active head lice infestation is likely to have had the infestation for at least 4-6 weeks, as it takes time for a person to develop sensitivity to the saliva of the louse that results in the characteristic itchiness.
- Nearly half of the cases that nonmedical personnel diagnose as head lice are not lice.
- Lice do not harbor or transmit disease or infection.
- Lice infestation is neither a reportable nor medically urgent situation.
- Children are more frequently infested than adults.
- Caucasians are more frequently infested than other ethnic groups, likely due to differences in the structure of the hair shaft.
- All socioeconomic groups are equally affected.
- The most common effect of lice is itching of the scalp.
- A nit is an egg, and is not contagious.
- Nits are generally unable to survive when further than ¼ inch away from the scalp because they need the body's heat to incubate and hatch.
- After treatment, there may still be "live" lice present; these are not capable of reproducing or "spreading", and will succumb to the treatment.
- Lice do not live on pets.
- Most head lice will die of starvation or desiccation within two days of falling off of their host.
- **The Centers for Disease Control (CDC), American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), Minnesota Dep't of Health (MDH) and National Association of School Nurses (NASN) all advise that students should not be excluded from school due to nits.**

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