

Give the Heave-Ho to Head Lice!

Second Grade Health Lesson

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E & E IPM Standard(s): 4.5.4 A, B, C

Introduction:

Pediculosis or head lice are tiny, wingless bugs about the size of a sesame seed or smaller. They have six legs with tiny claws and live only on human scalps. Head lice can range in color from light brown to gray. While annoying, head lice are not life threatening.

Schools and manufacturers of lice products estimate head lice cases at 12-15 million infestations a year in the United States alone. Most of those infested are children under the age of twelve.

Head lice do not hop, jump, or fly. They migrate through direct contact with an infested person and their belongings.

The most common symptom of a head lice infestation is persistent itching, particularly around the ears, back of the neck and crown, but some people never itch at all.

Diagnosis of head lice is usually made by finding nits (lice eggs) on a hair shaft.

Getting rid of head lice is a three-step process. You must kill all the live lice, check for and remove all the nits by combing and manual nit picking, and do a reasonable job of cleaning the infested person's belongings and home environment.

--- information collected from www.HeadLiceInfo.com

Learning Objectives:

1. Students will be able to describe symptoms of head lice.
2. Students will learn methods to treat head lice.
3. Students will identify ways to prevent transmission of head lice.

Materials:

Pictures of head lice and nits from books or web sites listed at end of this lesson.

Drawing paper

Crayons

Magazines

Timeline:

Two thirty-minute class periods

Procedure:

1. Prior to lesson, arrange for one or two children to start scratching their heads (caution them to use pads of fingers, not fingernails) while others are getting out their health books. Begin dialogue by asking him/them what is the problem. Gradually bring the other students into the discussion by asking what they think might be wrong.

2. Display pictures of the various stages of a louse's life cycle. Highlight these important facts:
 - a. Head lice are crawling insects. They don't fly, hop, or jump.
 - b. Nits are laid on hairs.
 - c. Nits don't live on pets.
 - d. Lice need blood to survive.
 - e. Head lice are transmitted by direct contact with an infested person or their belongings.
 - f. Anyone can get head lice if they have contact with another person who is infested.
3. List methods of treating head lice.
 - a. Combing with super fine comb or an actual nit comb and manually picking out lice.
 - b. Washing hair with shampoo containing pediculicides (pesticides used to eliminate head lice) CAUTION: Never use shampoo containing Lindane, which may cause serious side effects.
 - c. The safest, non-toxic treatment is using olive oil to smother the Lice. This is a five-step method called Head Lice to Dead Lice (video or book available at <http://www.HeadLiceInfo.com/20facts.html>)
4. Students will share their ideas about the ways they think head lice can be transmitted. Supply any ways they may have missed.
 - a. Sharing hats, helmets, headphones
 - b. Sharing combs and brushes
 - c. Sharing clothes, pillows, or stuffed animals of an infested person
 - d. Putting heads together while working in class

Analysis:

1. Divide class into small groups and give the following assignments:
 - a. Group 1- Prepare 2 or 3 small skits showing how students use the prevention rules to avoid the spread of head lice.
 - b. Group 2- Make a chart showing things they can safely share. May draw pictures or cut from magazines. Label pictures.
 - c. Group 3- Make a chart showing things they should NOT share in order to prevent the spread of head lice. Draw or use magazine pictures. Label pictures.
2. Working in pairs, students will make posters with rules or warnings about head lice prevention to display throughout the school. This project could be done in a second class period.

Discussion:

1. Can you name ways head lice can be transmitted?
2. Is there a safe, non-toxic way to treat head lice?
3. Does having head lice mean you are a "dirty person"?

Web Sites:

www.headlice.org/index.html (facts, games, etc.)

www.HeadLiceInfo.com (answer questions and gives facts)

www.hsph.harvard.edu/headlice.html (excellent information with photos of lice and nits and easy to read flow charts to show management of head lice at home and school)

www.Lice.com (gallery of pictures, information for parents and maps to show current lice infestations, educational materials – commercially sponsored by “Clear”)