



The Facts of LICE!

Kansas regulations do not require individuals with head lice or nits to be excluded from school or child care. Head lice can be a nuisance, but they have not been shown to spread disease and are not considered a public health hazard. The burden of unnecessary absenteeism to the students, families and communities far outweighs any perceived risks associated with head lice. Check out these common myths and learn the facts of lice!

Myth

Fact

It is easy to get lice.

Lice are spread by head-to-head contact and are much harder to get than a cold, the flu, ear infections, pink eye, strep throat or impetigo.

Avoiding lice is important, as they are dirty and spread disease.

Lice do not spread any known disease, nor are they impacted by dirty or clean hygiene. They are just annoying.

Head lice are very sturdy creatures and can survive many days off of people in furniture, linens or clothing.

Head lice need a blood meal every few hours and the warmth of the human scalp to survive. After falling off a person, they will die within one to two days.

Nits (lice eggs) can fall off a person's head, hatch and cause another person to get lice.

Nits are glued to the hair shaft by a cement-like substance and are very hard to remove. When a nymph (baby louse) is hatched, it must quickly have the warmth and food source of a head to survive.

Cutting a person's hair will prevent head lice infestations.

The length of a person's hair does not impact his or her risk of getting head lice.

You can get head lice from sitting at a desk next to someone who is infested with head lice.

Head lice are spread through direct head-to-head contact. They do not hop, jump or fly, so sitting near someone with head lice does not increase the risk of getting lice.

Lice are commonly spread throughout schools.

Transmission in schools are rare. It is more common to get head lice from family members, overnight guests and playmates who spend a lot of time together.

Lice are commonly spread through hats or helmets.

Head lice are spread most commonly by direct contact with the hair of an infested person. Spread by contact with inanimate objects and personal belongings may occur but is very uncommon.

Schools and child care facilities should screen all children for head lice, so everyone can be treated and the spread of head lice will be prevented.

Having regularly scheduled mass screenings does not reduce the incidence of head lice.

"No-nit" policies reduce the risk of head lice in schools and child care facilities.

Research shows "no-nit" policies do not decrease the number of cases of head lice. They do increase the risk of incorrect diagnosis of head lice, the number of days children are out of school, and negative social stigma associated with head lice. They also may hinder academic performance.

The only way to ensure you will not get head lice after a treatment is to remove all the nits.

Studies have shown the removal of nits immediately after treatment with a pediculicide is usually not necessary. Nits located further than ¼ inch from the base of hair shaft may be already hatched, non-viable, or empty casings.

You can get lice from your dog or other pets.

Head lice are specific to humans. Dogs, cats, and other pets do not play a role in the spread of head lice.

For more information, visit www.kdheks.gov/c-f/head_lice.htm.