



February/ March 2017

## HEALTH OFFICE NEWSLETTER

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**Winter Health Reminders:** A healthy school environment requires the cooperation and effort of us all working together. During this time of year we tend to see a higher incidence of strep throat, respiratory and gastrointestinal illnesses. The nurses of The Superior School District would like to remind everyone that they can help to protect themselves and their families from many of these airborne illnesses. Follow the *Habits for Good Health* listed below recommended by the Center for Disease Control.

### Habits for Good Health

- **Cover your nose and mouth** with a tissue when you cough or sneeze - throw the tissue away after you use it. If you do not have a tissue, cover your mouth and nose with the inside of your elbow.
- **Wash your hands often with soap and water** especially after you cough or sneeze. If you are not near water, use an alcohol based hand cleaner.
- **Stay away as much as you can from people who are sick.**
- **If you or your child gets the flu, stay home from work or school.** Do not go near other people so that you don't make them sick too.
- **Try not to touch your eyes, nose, or mouth.** Germs often spread this way.
- **Dress for the weather.** Come to school dressed for the winter. Wear layers of loose fitting clothing. Wear mittens and gloves. Wear a hat. Remember, the air that is trapped inside your clothing, warmed by your body heat, is the best protection from the cold.



## February is National Dental Health Month!

Lifelong habits begin at home. Make dental health part of your daily routine and share these reminders with your whole family:

- ☺ Brush your teeth at least twice a day with fluoride toothpaste, especially after breakfast and before bedtime. Drinking water after eating also helps to clear your teeth of food particles.
- ☺ Floss every day. An adult should help children under the age of eight to floss. Older children should be ready to floss on their own.
- ☺ Limit the number of times you eat snacks, especially the sticky ones and long lasting ones.
- ☺ Visit a dentist regularly for a routine checkup and a cleaning
- ☺ Protect your teeth by wearing a mouth guard when playing sports.
- ☺ Don't forget to change your tooth brush regularly, and after an illness.

### **Sweet snack facts:**

Eating a lot of snacks with sugar may cause cavities.

Every time you eat sugar, plaque in your mouth mixes with the sugar to make acid. The acid hurts the teeth and causes decay over time. This can be painful!

The school nurse can help you find a dental home for your family!



## HEAD LICE

Head lice are small parasitic insects that live on the scalps and necks of people. Head lice live on people and not on animals. The adult louse is flat, wingless and crawls. Lice cannot jump or fly. They have 6 legs with claws to grip onto the hair. They are contracted 98% of the time by head-to-head contact. Head lice prefer clean hair - the cleaner the better! Since lice glue their eggs to the hair shaft, clean hair allows for easier attachment.

**The life cycle of the louse consist of three stages.**

### **Stage 1 - Eggs:**

The head louse begins life as an egg, commonly referred to as a nit. Nits are laid by the adult female. The nits are firmly attached to the base of the hair shaft, next to the scalp, by a glue-like substance produced by the louse. Nits range in color from white, yellow, tan to grayish, depending on the stage of development and whether or not they have hatched or been killed by treatment. Nits are oval or teardrop shaped, smooth and very small (about the size of a knot of thread). Nits are hard to see and often are confused for dandruff, hair spray droplets or other debris.

### **Stage 2 - Nymphs:**

The nits are incubated by body heat for about 7-12 days before they hatch to release a nymph. The nit shell remains on the hair shaft after hatching and becomes a dull yellow or translucent white and may have a wrinkled look. The nymph looks like an adult louse, but is only about the size of a pinhead. Nymphs need a blood meal within hours of hatching to survive. During the next 7-10 days, the nymph continues to grow and mature, going through three molts, until it becomes a full adult louse.

### **Stage 3 - Adults:**

The adult louse is about the size of a sesame seed. The life span of an adult louse is about 3-4 weeks. The female usually is larger than the male and can lay up to 10 nits per day (only nits that are fertilized will develop and hatch). The live adult louse needs to feed on blood every 3-6 hours. Without blood meals, or once away from the human host, the adult louse can usually survive for no longer than 24-36 hours.

### **Detecting Head Lice:**

The gold standard for diagnosing head lice is finding a live louse on the head. Nits that are viable are usually found at the nape of the neck or behind the ears, within  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch of the scalp.

### **Signs & Symptoms:**

For many people, head lice cause no symptoms. When symptoms are present, they include:

- **Itching** - Itching of the head is the most common symptom. Itching is caused by the saliva-producing toxin that the louse injects into the scalp when it feeds. The amount of itching may be slight to severe. The degree of itching that occurs is often dependent upon the extent of infestation. Itching may be very mild if the infestation has just occurred, or it may be severe if the infestation has gone untreated for a long time.

- Sores on the head - Occasionally, very tiny red areas on the scalp may be seen due to the bites from the louse. Sores on the head may develop from continued itching and scratching. Sometimes these sores can become infected. You should contact your health care provider if you think a sore has become infected. Most lice infestations do not lead to infections.
- Tickling feeling of something moving in the hair - Another symptom reported by some people is a tickling or crawling feeling in the hair.
- Sleeplessness - Difficulty sleeping is also a common sign of lice infestation as the lice are more active at night and may disrupt sleep.

**Management and Treatment of Head Lice Includes:**

1. Careful inspection and screening of the hair and scalp to identify lice and/or nits correctly.
2. Use of a pediculicidal (head lice) product if live lice or viable nits are found.
3. The cleaning of personal items and the environment.
4. A repeat treatment with pediculicidal product 9 days following initial treatment, if not otherwise indicated on the product label.

Head lice may be brought into the home after a person has had head-to-head contact with an infested person at child care, school, camp, sleepovers, etc. The most rapid spread of head lice occurs through the home because of the close proximity of family members. Whenever one person in the family has been identified to have lice, everyone living in the home should be inspected. Any friends, family member or other people who have had close head-to-head contact with the infested person over the previous week should be notified so they can be inspected for head lice as well.

**Cleaning of personal items and the environment: It is important to remember....**

- Head lice generally cannot survive more than 24-36 hours at room temperature off of a human host.
- The viable nits attached to hairs that become separated or detached from the human host may remain viable for between 10-14 days; however, there needs to be an ideal temperature for them to hatch and once the nits hatch, the nymphs must find a human host within hours to survive.
- You do not need to spend a lot of money for cleaning supplies. Sprays for the house and furniture are not needed and are not recommended.
- Even though cleaning the environment is important, excessive cleaning such as scrubbing the walls is not necessary. Concentrate on heads, where lice live and feed. Appropriate initial treatment and a repeat treatment nine days following will go much further in managing head lice than excessive cleaning.

### **Family combs and brushes:**

- Soak hair-care tools in hot water (130° F) for at least 10 min.
- When possible, make sure every member of the household has his or her own comb or brush. Tell children not to share these items with others.
- Encourage and educate your child about not sharing combs, hair accessories and hats.

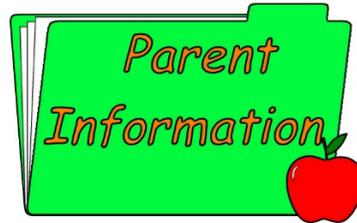
### **Articles of clothing and bedding:**

- To kill lice and nits, machine wash all washable clothing and bed linens used by the infested person(s) during the 2 days before treatment. Use the hot water (130° F) cycle during the washing process. Dry laundry using high heat for 20 minutes.
- Washing clothes to remove lice and nits does not need to be repeated daily and is only necessary on the day of treatment and retreatment.
- Articles that cannot be machine washed, such as stuffed animals, pillows or comforters, can be vacuumed, dry cleaned or stored in a sealed plastic bag for 2 weeks. Another option is to place the item in a hot dryer for 20 minutes.
- Encourage your child to hang their coat in their cubby or locker and put their hat and mittens inside their coat sleeve.

### **Treatment of the environment:**

- The spread of head lice by contact with inanimate objects may occur, but is very uncommon. Head lice would have difficulty attaching firmly to smooth or slippery surfaces such as plastic, metal, polished synthetic leathers and other similar materials.
- Floors, carpet, upholstered furniture, pillows, and mattresses should be vacuumed to pick up any hairs that may have living lice or nits attached to them.
- Vehicle car seats and child safety seats can be cleaned by vacuuming or running a lint remover (rollers with sticky surfaces) over the seats.

**Head lice are a common community problem. They are not dangerous and do not transmit disease. The school nurse will notify parents of the student with lice or nits and recommend treatment that evening. The student will be sent home at the end of the school day unless the parent chooses to come and pick up their child early and the student may return to school the next day if they have received treatment at home.**



## Incoming 6<sup>th</sup> graders and 9<sup>th</sup> graders:

The end of winter / beginning of spring always brings "Transition Night" for our incoming 6<sup>th</sup> graders to Superior Middle School and incoming 9<sup>th</sup> graders to Superior High School. We would like to highlight a few reminders for parents regarding these transitions:

- All incoming 6<sup>th</sup> graders will need a Tdap and a 2<sup>nd</sup> varicella on file at the start of the 2017-18 school year. Please try to obtain this early (this can be done now!) and give your child's immunization records to your school nurse.
- All incoming 9<sup>th</sup> graders also need to be up-to-date with all their immunizations. Please check with your middle school nurse if you are unsure if your child still needs to have immunizations.
- All immunizations can be obtained through your primary care provider or through the local health department if you meet the guidelines for the VFC (Vaccines for Children Program). Children through 18 years of age who meet at least one of the following criteria are eligible to receive VFC vaccine:
  - **Medicaid eligible:** A child who is eligible for the Medicaid program. (For the purposes of the VFC program, the terms "Medicaid-eligible" and "Medicaid-enrolled" are equivalent and refer to children who have health insurance covered by a state Medicaid program)
  - **Uninsured:** A child who has no health insurance coverage
  - **American Indian or Alaska Native:** As defined by the Indian Health Care Improvement Act (25 U.S.C. 1603)
  - **Underinsured**
- **9<sup>th</sup> graders who are interested in playing a sport will need to have a Sports Physical on file prior to the first day of practice. Sports Physicals can be done any time after April 1, 2017 and then are good for the next 2 years. A Sports Physical form can be obtained from the Activities Director, Ray Kosey, or from the Superior High School website.**