Lice in the Classroom: Dispelling Myths & Taking Positive Action

Presented by: VAMOUSSE
Head lice: The basics

- Head lice have been pestering humans since ancient times - nit combs & desiccated lice have been found on Egyptian mummies.

- Lice can’t jump or fly; they move by grasping the hair shaft & crawling.

- Lice are annoying & pesky, but they aren’t a health hazard & don’t spread disease.

- The itching associated with lice is caused by an allergic reaction to their saliva, the same reason mosquito bites itch.
Who gets head lice, and how?

- There are as many as 12MM cases in the US each year - second most prevalent childhood health concern.

- Lice don’t discriminate; they’re not a sign of poor hygiene or a dirty household.

- Recurrent cases are often due to transmission between family members at home.

- They’re spread by direct head-to-head contact & are quick crawlers in the hair.
How do you spot lice?

- Early detection is key to preventing spread. School nurses & teachers are often the first to detect lice.

- Signs & symptoms include:
  - Excessive scratching
  - A tickling feeling
  - An irritated scalp

- But not everyone experiences these symptoms.
  - And itching symptoms can take 4-6 weeks to manifest the first time a person gets lice.
What do lice look like?

Lice are difficult to spot. They are:
- about the size of a sesame seed,
- & often camouflaged by hair color.

Nits can be easier to see, especially with a magnifying lens. They are:
- about the size of a poppy seed,
- yellow or white in color,
- & can’t be brushed off, unlike dirt or dandruff.
What about super lice?

Super lice ARE:

- Resistant to traditional pesticides (pyrethrins, permethrin).
- Growing in prevalence & found in 42 states.

Super lice ARE NOT:

- Different in appearance, bigger or stronger.
- Invincible.
  - Pesticide-free OTC products are designed to kill resistant lice too.
  - Manual removal is effective with diligence.
What are the treatment options?

| Over-the-counter solutions: | • Traditional pesticide-based products, now facing resistance issues  
  ➢ Pyrethrins, permethrin  
  • Newer, pesticide-free options are effective against these super lice & safe for repeat use  
  ➢ Natrum muriaticum, dimethicone |
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<td>The first stop for many families</td>
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<th>Prescription medications</th>
<th>Obtained through a health care provider, often pesticide based</th>
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| Manual removal | Effective when done correctly, but is time consuming  
  ➢ Some parents opt for lice clinics to handle the nit picking |
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| Natural & home remedies | Mayo, essential oils, almond/olive oil, etc.  
  ➢ Useful as combing facilitators  
  ➢ Not FDA regulated or scientifically proven effective |
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“Ideally lice treatment should be safe, free of toxic chemicals, easy to get without a prescription, easy to use, effective & affordable.”

- American Academy of Pediatrics
Easy tips to reduce risk

- **No sharing.** Remind kids to keep belongings that touch their heads to themselves.
- **Give them space.** Tell kids not to share cubbies or lockers with friends.
- **Play smarter.** Encourage kids to avoid games that involve head-to-head contact.
- **Keep alert.** If you notice a child with symptoms, alert your school nurse or administrator.
Cleaning the home

The risk of getting lice from carpet & furniture is low:

- Lice die within 1-2 days if they’re off the head & can’t feed.
- Nits can’t hatch without the warmth of the head.

Many parents still want to clean the home after treatment. Here’s where to focus:

- **Machine-washable items:** Wash all clothing, bedding & other washable items in hot water* & dry on high heat for 20 min.
- **Items you can vacuum:** Vacuum furniture, carpets, rugs, etc.; empty the canister or dispose of the bag right away.
- **Items worn or used on the head:** Soak brushes, combs & hair accessories in hot* soapy water for 10 min. to disinfect them.

*At least 130°F

Use of household sprays & fogs could be dangerous & is discouraged by the CDC. However, families may want to consider a pesticide-free home cleaning aid.
Supporting kids and families

Have no fear
- School transmission is rare; lice are brought into the classroom from the community.
- Lice are a nuisance but not a health hazard.

Talk it out
- Reassure parents: up to 12 million cases/year means lice are part of childhood.
- Help reduce stigma - share information (w/kids, parents & peers!).
- Direct families to additional resources.
- Encourage parents to check the whole family for 2 weeks.

But maintain privacy
- Kids & parents may feel embarrassed.
- Help prevent ostracism by classmates & others.
References

The information in this presentation was compiled from the following sources:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
• http://www.cdc.gov/parasites/lice/head/gen_info/faqs.html
• http://www.cdc.gov/parasites/lice/head/treatment.html
• http://www.cdc.gov/parasites/lice/head/prevent.html

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• http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/head-lice/basics/definition/con-20030792
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American Academy of Pediatrics
• http://www.aappublications.org/news/2016/04/11/Lice041116

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• https://www.pediatricnursing.net/ce/2016/article4005226235.pdf

Vamousse
• http://vamousselice.com/lice-info/

“Lice in the Classroom: Dispelling Myths & Taking Positive Action” is presented by Vamousse is dedicated to reducing the use of pesticides by providing a full range of safe, effective and pesticide-free head lice solutions for the family and home.