



Kihei Charter School

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Dear Parents and Guardian:

Recently there have been some concerns in our community regarding head lice (ukus). As a school we share these concerns. We request that you please take the time to read the following information from the Hawaii State Department of Health and to look through your child's hair and examine their scalp tonight. If you find any lice or eggs on your child, please treat them immediately (see treatment information below) and do not allow your child to return to school until, at minimum, 24 hours after the first application of medicated shampoo.

What are head lice (ukus)?

Head lice, also known scientifically as *Pediculus capitis*, are parasitic insects that feed on human blood and cause severe itching of the head. Head lice are frequently called "ukus." Pediculosis is a general term used for infestation of the body or hair with adult lice, larvae, and nits (eggs). Head lice are relatively common and are not a major health hazard.

How do you get it?

You can get head lice by sharing the same bed or clothes (such as hats and scarves), combs, and/or brushes with an infested person. The lice survive only 1 or 2 days away from the scalp. Having head lice is not an indication of uncleanliness. All socioeconomic groups are affected.

What are the symptoms of head lice?

Usually, the first symptom of head lice is persistent itching or scratching at the back of the head or around the ears. Check the hair shafts for head lice or their nits (eggs).

When do symptoms start?

It can take as long as 2 to 3 weeks or longer for a person to notice the presence of the lice or nits.

For how long is a person contagious for head lice?

As long as lice or nits are still found on a person or their clothing, they can spread it to others.

What is the treatment for head lice?

Medicated cream rinses are used to kill lice and their nits. The medicated shampoo or cream treatment may need to be applied twice, with a 7-day interval separating the applications. This assures that all nits that survived the first application are killed on second application. Special fine-toothed combs may be of some help in the removal of nits from hair.

If you get head lice once, can you get it again?

Yes.

Should a person with head lice be excluded from work or school?

Yes. Until live lice and viable nits (eggs) are eradicated, infested persons should be excluded. This includes isolating the person from 24 hours following application of effective medicated shampoo or cream treatment.

How do you keep from getting it?

Do not share clothing, hats, combs, or bed sheets belonging to a person infested with lice.

Wash clothes and sheets used by an infested person in detergent and hot water (130°F for 20 minutes) or dry-clean clothes (including hats and scarves) to kill lice and nits. This should be done concurrently (at the same time) as the hair is treated for head lice.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the school at 875-0700.