



The Pennsylvania Department of Health (PA DOH) encourages caregivers to follow the recommendations listed in the latest [Providing Care for Individuals with Head Lice](#).

IMPORTANT NOTE: PA DOH does not recommend a specific product or products to use to treat individuals with lice. Both over the counter and prescription products are available.

Contact your health care provider or pharmacist for recommendations on appropriate treatment.

OVERVIEW

The guidance highlights appropriate steps a caregiver of an individual with head lice should take.

Key points in the guidance:

- The caregiver can examine an individual’s head for head lice infestation.
- Children who have head lice, do not need to leave school early. Once they start treatment at home, they can return to school.
- Prescriptions or over-the-counter medication can treat head lice infestation.

HOW TO IDENTIFY HEAD LICE ON AN INDIVIDUAL

If you or your child has symptoms of head lice infestation, examine their head, especially behind the ears and at the back of the neck, for crawling lice and nits. If crawling lice or nits are found, examine all household members for head lice every 2-3 days. Treat anyone with lice (crawling) or nits within $\frac{1}{4}$ inch or less of the scalp.

For additional information, visit, [How to Examine for Head Lice \(cdc.gov\)](#)



INFORMATION FOR SCHOOLS

The PA DOH, in accordance with the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), does NOT recommend schools have a no-nit policy or perform school wide head lice checks. Department of Health regulations ([28 PA Code, Chapter 27 Communicable and Non-Communicable Diseases, Section 27.71 \(opens in a new tab\)](#)) requires that students be excluded if suspected of having live lice. These regulations do not specify that the student is to be excluded immediately.

The “no-nit” policy (a child being free of nits before returning to school) was discontinued for the following reasons:

- Many nits are more than $\frac{1}{4}$ inch from the scalp and are unlikely to hatch to become crawling lice or may in fact be empty shells.
- Nits bond to hair shafts and are very unlikely to transfer to other individuals.
- Unnecessary days off cause a burden to the students, families, and communities and far outweighs the risks associated with head lice.
- Misdiagnosis of nits is very common during nit checks conducted by nonmedical professionals.

It is recommended that students with live lice be sent home at the end of the day. The student’s parents should be contacted and provided with instructions to treat the student, any affected family members, and the home environment. They are to be readmitted to school immediately following the first treatment. It is also recommended that schools have a policy and procedure in place to address head lice.

PROVIDING CARE

Follow and complete all [treatment](#) instructions and steps to successfully eliminate head lice.

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