

Jefferson Elementary School

ROXBURY TOWNSHIP PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Corn Hollow Road Succasunna, NJ 07876 973-584-8955
www.roxbury.org Fax: 973-584-4380

Melissa Cosgrove
Principal

Dear Parents:

The little critters known as “head lice” seem to appear on and off during the school year. Before the school year begins, we thought this information would be helpful to you. It is very common when children come together for clubs and sports, camp or sleepovers to discover cases of head lice. Please check your student’s head *prior* to the start of the school year.

Please remember that getting lice does not mean you are “dirty”. It is just being in the wrong place at the wrong time. Do not panic, there are methods to deal with this problem. The Roxbury website has a good resource packet from the state of Michigan which provides comprehensive information regarding head lice.

Head lice are very small, brown, or gray wingless insects. Lice do not fly or jump, they generally crawl from person to person. The eggs (nits) are attached toward the root of the hair shaft and look like a tiny tear drop. They are about the size of a sesame seed. The nit may be amber colored and translucent, black or a whitish color. It is different from the round, tiny “sac” that you find at the root of the hair shaft when it has been pulled out. It is also different from hair casts, which encompass the hair and are easily removed. The nits are usually found at the back of the neck at the hairline and behind the ears. Eggs are attached very tightly and must be removed with a special comb or your fingernails (they do not shake away like dandruff or hair products). Your child may also complain about an itchy scalp.

Lice need a human host to survive. They survive only 24 hours off a human host. Once laid, it takes 7-10 days for eggs to hatch, and another 7-10 days to mature for a female to begin laying her own eggs.

It is very important that you keep a watchful eye and check your children’s hair frequently. ***There are simple ways to cut down on the possibility of infestation:***

1. Check your child’s head weekly for signs of lice or nits.
2. Do not share combs, brushes or hair accessories, especially at sleepovers!
3. Cover movie theatre seats or other public upholstered seats with a jacket or plastic cover.
4. If traveling abroad, be aware of at risk areas.

5. Blow dry the hair as lice do not like heat.
6. Keep long hair pulled up.
7. Do not try on hats or scarves in stores, or use brushes available for everyone.
8. There are preventative, natural sprays that *may* be affective in repelling lice.

If you find head lice please follow the recommendations below very carefully.

1. Ask your doctor or pharmacist for a recommendation for a special shampoo.
2. Follow instructions EXACTLY. The shampoo kills the live lice and loosens (not kills) the nits, or eggs, so they can be combed out using the special comb (you may also consider buying an extra lice comb set that has narrower metal teeth). Combing out the nits is the most important aspect of treatment. This prevents another group from hatching. Rinsing the hair with equal parts of vinegar and water, or coating the hair with a little baby oil or coconut hair oil may make the removal of the eggs easier. A good, bright light will help in viewing the hair. A magnifying light can also be helpful.
3. Check all family members and treat them if there is evidence of lice. Clean well under fingernails.
4. More than one treatment is usually necessary. Follow product instructions.
5. It is important to disinfect all objects and clothing that are used near the hair, such as bedding, combs, hair accessories, jackets, hats, stuffed animals, etc. Hot water and laundry detergent with a hot dryer cycle or dry cleaning is sufficient. Stuffed toys can be put into plastic bags and put away for 2 weeks.
6. Vacuum the house and furniture thoroughly, especially the mattresses, pillows and around beds. Vacuum your car if the seats are fabric.
7. Be aware that animals cannot get lice or spread lice.
8. Please contact the school nurse immediately if your child has become infested so the other children in the class can be checked and the parents notified. If your child has lice, they will not be readmitted to school until they have been treated for live lice. Each case will be treated confidentially. (Please understand that at times other children do become aware of the situation, and may learn who is affected).
9. Using a hair straightener has also been found to make nit removal easier.

It is important that all of these things be done ON THE SAME DAY to prevent reinfestation, as the lice can live off the hair for a short period of time. Working together we will be able to take care of this problem in a short amount of time.

If a student in your child's classroom is identified as having lice, the class will be checked and a letter will go home alerting you (no names will be mentioned) if 10% of the class is positive for head lice.

In addition to the information on the Roxbury Public School websites, this site may be helpful.

1. www.headlice.org/ A special comb, the Licemeister is available for purchase.

Sincerely,
Kate Zenna, RN
School Nurse