



# Head Lice Management

## Updated Guidelines

Health Services  
Pleasanton Unified School District

# Goals

- Share current information regarding head lice in our schools
- Review recommended guidelines for schools
- Compare our previous lice procedures to recommendations

# Head Lice

- Who are they?
- What do we know about them?



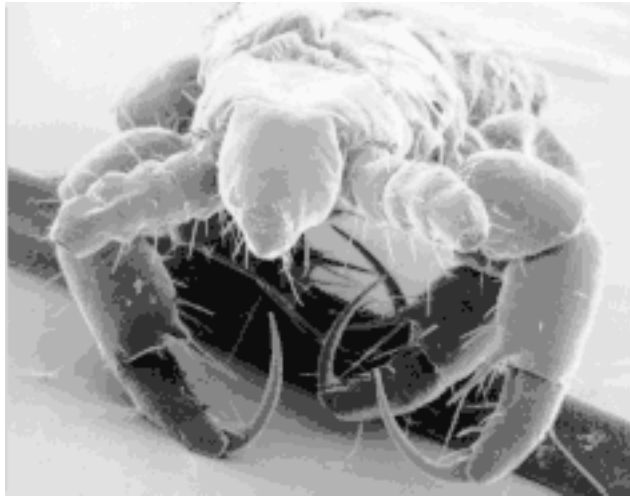
# Basic Facts

- 1 in 100 students each school year
- Adult 2-3 mm
- 6 legs
- Tan to grayish white
- Females live up to 4 weeks
- Survive less than 1 day away from scalp



# Basic Facts

- Crawl, no hopping, no jumping, no flying
- Not a sign of poor hygiene
- Do not cause disease

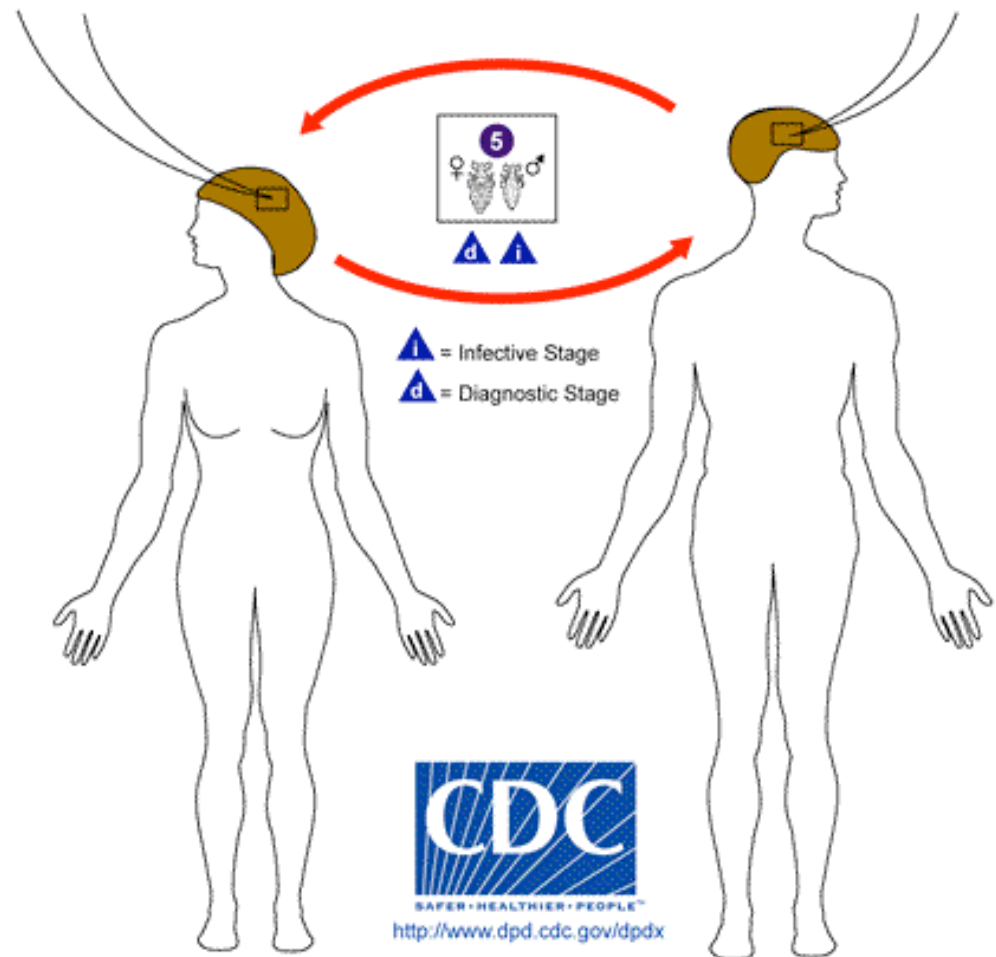
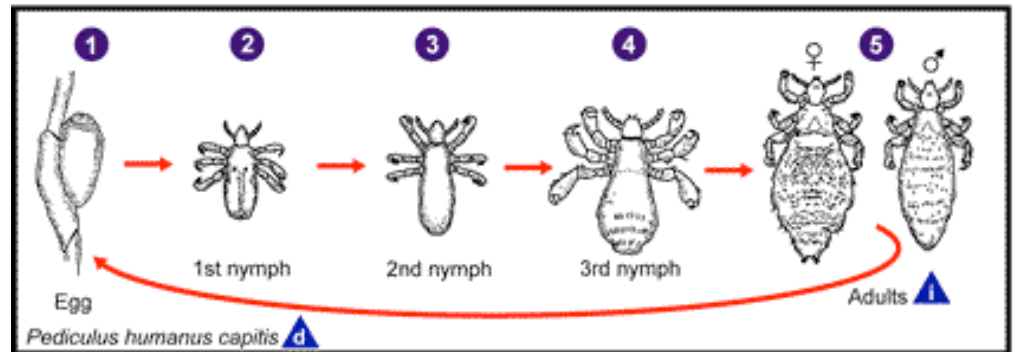


# Basic Facts

- Feeds by injecting small amounts of saliva and sucking small amounts of blood every few hours
- Itching is caused by sensitization to the saliva → takes 4-6 weeks
- Less likely in African Americans
  - Oval-shaped hair shaft

# Life Cycle

- eggs hatch in 8 to 9 days
- become adult in 9-12 days



# Egg Facts

- Called “nits”
  - Could be
    - Viable eggs
    - Old dead eggs
    - Empty egg casing
- Firmly attached within 4mm of scalp
- More than 1 cm from scalp are very unlikely to be viable





# Treatment Options

- OTC products
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> application recommended 7-10 days later
- Prescription products
- Alternative therapies
  - Not regulated by FDA
- Manual Method
  - Daily combing and removal of nits

# Transmission

- Head lice infest people, not schools or buses

# Transmission

- Direct contact with head of infested person
- Rarely through contact with belongings
- Healthy louse is unlikely to leave a healthy head
- Not found in carpets in classrooms



# National Recommendations

American Academy of Pediatrics

National Association of School Nurses

American School Health Association

## State Recommendations

- California Department of Public Health
- Alameda County Public Health Department

# Former District Procedures

- Classroom screenings if more than 1 student in a class is infested
- Screening for siblings of infested students

# National Recommendation

- Classroom and school wide screenings have not been found to be effective in reducing the incidence of lice in schools.
- Rationale: Lice are unlikely to spread in the classroom. Screening of students who have had head to head contact such as siblings is reasonable.

# Former District Procedure

- Letters sent to all parents in class or letters sent to all parents in school if more than one classroom is included.

# National Recommendation

- Letters to classroom/school parents are unnecessary.
- Rationale: Lice are unlikely to spread in the classroom.
- Parents should be educated and strongly encouraged to share information with close playmates to avoid re-infestation.



# Former District Procedure

- A student found with lice and/or nits is immediately excluded from school.

# National Recommendation

- Parents of a student found to have lice and/or nits are notified to begin treating the student at the end of the school day. Students may return to the classroom.
- Rationale: A student found to have an active infestation likely has had the infestation for 1 month or more and pose little risk to other students.

# Former District Procedure

- Students must be free of lice and nits to return to school.

# National Recommendation

- “No nit” procedures should be eliminated.
- Rationale: Lice are unlikely to spread in the classroom.
- Removal of nits immediately after treatment with a pediculicide is not necessary because only live lice can cause an infection.

# New Lice Procedures

- Students may remain in class.
- Parents notified to begin treatment at the conclusion of the school day.
- Nit removal is not necessary with use of pediculicide.
- No whole class screenings.
- No lice letters sent to classroom parents.
- The district nurse will assist parents who struggle with proper treatment.

# Final Quote

- From the American Academy of Pediatrics

*“No healthy child should be excluded from or allowed to miss school time because of head lice. No-nit policies for return to school should be abandoned.”*