

St. Thomas C.E. Primary School

Advice for Parents



Infections of Children

Dear Parent

Infections of Children

When children get together they often have close contact and can pass infections to each other. This is true when they are at home, playing together and also when they are in school. Most of these infections are mild and do not last long.

Headteachers make every effort to make sure that all their schools are safe, pleasant places for the children. They believe, like us, that parents need information on infections, how to avoid them and what to do about them.

This booklet contains information which you might find useful. You can get information and advice from your School Nurse, Health Visitor, School Doctor, Family Doctor or your local Pharmacist.

The most important way of protecting children's health is immunisation. We strongly recommend this. If you are not sure that your children are fully immunised, please ask your Family Doctor or Local Clinic.

Yours sincerely

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HEAD LICE

WHAT ARE HEAD LICE?

- Head lice are tiny insects no larger than the head of a pin that live on the hair. They feed from the human scalp by sucking blood from the skin; this leaves tiny red spots and it is these spots, not the head lice that can itch.
- Nits are not the same as lice. Nits are the empty egg cases which stick to the hair.
- You only have head lice if you find a living moving louse.
- Anybody can get head lice - adults and children.
- Head lice don't care if the hair is dirty or clean, short or long.
- A lot of head louse infections are caught from family and friends in the community, not at school. You mostly catch head lice from someone you or your child know.
- Head lice can walk from one head to another if the heads are pressed together for some time. They do not fly, jump or swim.
- Lice cannot survive out of the hair and cannot be caught or transferred to pets or other animals.

HOW TO DETECT HEAD LICE

- Ensure that there is good lighting.
- Wet the hair well and towel until damp but not dripping.
- First, comb the hair with an ordinary comb. Then, using a detector comb (available from your Pharmacist) begin at the top of the head and, making sure that the comb is touching the scalp, slowly draw the comb toward the ends of the hair.
- Check the teeth of the comb carefully.
- Repeat steps (3) and (4), working your way around the head from the top of the scalp to the ends of the hair. This should take 10-15 minutes.

If there are head lice, you will find one or more on the teeth of the comb.

It may help to rub a handful of conditioner into the hair. If you do, you will need to wipe it off the comb with tissue paper and look for lice in it.

TREATMENT FOR HEAD LICE

Do not treat unless you are sure you have found a living, moving louse.

- Your GP, local Pharmacist or Health Visitor will be able to advise and recommend appropriate treatment of head lice.
- The School Nurse at you local Clinic will be able to advise you on the detection of head lice.
- Treatment is with head louse lotion or liquid
- You should use at least one small bottle of lotion or liquid per head - more if the hair is thick.
- Please follow the instruction provided with the treatment carefully, remembering that hair should be allowed to dry naturally, avoiding heat.
- Repeat the entire treatment as directed seven days later using a second bottle of the same lotion or liquid.
- Only members of the family and contacts with live lice need to be treated. They should be all treated on the same day.

HAIR CARE

- The best way to stop head louse infection is for all the family to check their heads regularly using detection combing at least once a week.
- Pay special attention to the areas around the ears, crown and neck line.
- A good time is just after washing hair.
- Good hair care involves regular, thorough combing or brushing.

REMEMBER

The best way to stop infection is to do detection combing regularly.

NEVER use insecticidal liquids, lotions or shampoos to PREVENT infection, or just in case.

It doesn't matter how many nits you have, or how itchy your scalp is - if you can't find a living moving louse, you don't have lice.

IMPETIGO

WHAT IS IT?

Impetigo is a skin infection. It often appears around the nose and mouth.

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

It looks like blisters which may contain pus and start to weep and form sores. It often becomes crusted and yellow in colour.

HOW DO YOU CATCH IT?

Usually by touching the discharge from the sores or blisters, It can also be passed on objects which have been in contact with the discharge e.g. towels

HOW DO YOU TREAT IT?

You may need antibiotics usually as cream and sometimes by mouth as well. You should see your Doctor or the School Nurse for advice.

WHAT IS THE INCUBATION PERIOD?

There is a delay between picking up the germ and developing the blisters. This is often 4 to 10 days but may be shorter.

SHOULD YOUR CHILD STAY OFF SCHOOL?

Children should not be in school if they have weeping sores.

HOW DO YOU STOP IT SPREADING?

- Thorough hand washing is the most important measure to stop the germ spreading. Children should be reminded to wash their hands frequently and always after using the toilet and before eating.
- Family members who have the infection should have their own towels and flannels.
- Once you have started treatment and the sores have dried there is much less risk of passing it to others.

VERRUCAE

GENERAL INFORMATION REGARDING VERRUCAE:

1. Verrucae are caused by a virus similar to that which causes warts on other parts of the body.
2. They are contagious, but not a serious health hazard - more of a nuisance.
3. They will clear eventually.
4. It is possible to have a verrucae and not be aware of it.

POSSIBLE SOURCES OF VERRUCAE:

1. Swimming Baths/Communal Showers
2. Barefoot activities - PE, Gymnastics, Karate, Judo, Dancing.
3. Home I Holiday I Hospital accommodation.
4. Wearing communal footwear / Other shoes, eg Ten Pin Bowling, Roller Skating etc.
5. Shoe Shops.

OPTIONS FOR TREATMENT: If verrucae are painful or spreading:

- Leave untreated (keep covered)
- Self treatment with proprietary treatment, i.e. self bought or prescribed by your GP.
- Private treatment from State Registered Chiropodist - can be expensive.
- Treatment at Whelley Hospital, Standish Clinic, Grasmere St HealthCentre or Golborne Clinic, free of charge, by a State Registered Chiropodist - the choice of treatment being at the chiropodist's discretion.

IN THE MEANTIME:

1. Wear Swim-socks whilst swimming (following authorisation from your local swimming pool)
2. Keep verrucae covered with plaster at all times
3. Do not share footwear, or wear communal footwear.

MOST VERRUCAE CLEAR WITHOUT ANY TREATMENT

THREADWORMS

WHAT ARE THEY?

Threadworms are tiny white worms about half an inch long which live in the bowel. They lay their tiny eggs on the skin around the back passage. They are very common, especially in young children.

HOW WILL YOU KNOW IF YOU HAVE THEM?

You may see them in stools/motions. They look like threads of cotton. They cause itching around the back passage, especially at night, which may keep your child awake at night.

HOW ARE THEY CAUGHT?

Through scratching or wiping the back passage, the eggs get onto the hands and under the finger nails. If they are not removed by washing they can get into the mouth directly from the hands or on food or other objects. Bed linen, night clothes or underwear of infected people may contain eggs, which can be passed to others if not removed by washing. Occasionally eggs may be found on flooring and carpet.

HOW DO YOU TREAT IT?

You should see your Doctor who may prescribe treatment. This will need to be taken by all the family. You can also get advice from the School Nurse or Health Visitor.

HOW DO YOU STOP IT SPREADING?

- Frequent and thorough hand washing especially after using the toilet and before eating.
- Keep finger nails short.
- Family members should have their own towels and flannels.

YOU DO NOT NEED TO KEEP YOUR CHILD OFF SCHOOL

SCABIES

GUIDE TO THE TREATMENT OF SCABIES

Scabies is caused by a tiny mite burrowing in the uppermost horny layers of the skin. It passes readily from person to person under the conditions of close household contact. It may be some time before any skin problems appear. For this reason, the following rules must be observed:

The whole household must have treatment - whether they have symptoms or not. This includes:

- The family (father, mother and the children)
- Other in the house (Granny, lodgers)
- Visitors if close contact (boyfriend, girl friend, babysitter)

All involved must have treatment at the same time - to prevent re-infection of each other.

TREATMENT

- Apply the liquid or cream to the entire skin surface. Use cotton wool or a sponge or brush. Make sure you treat all the 'nooks and crannies' - especially around the genital area, round the fingers and under the nails. A thin film of liquid or cream should be applied to the face and ears avoiding the eyes and mouth and to any bald areas on the scalp.
- Do not wash off or bathe for 12 hours. If hands or any parts must be washed during this period, the treatment must be re-applied to those areas immediately.
- Repeat stages 1 and 2 after one week.
- There is no need to wash bedding and clothing as the scabies mite cannot survive away from the body.
- The infection is cleared by the treatment. However, the itching and rash may persist for up to 7 days. An anti-irritant cream can be applied if necessary if the itching persists longer. Ask your doctor or pharmacist for advice.
- Remember - treat everyone (at the same time).
- Do not use the treatment more often than once a week and do not use more than three times. If the itch and rash is continuing, ask your pharmacist or doctor for advice.