

# District Health Department #4

100 Woods Circle, Suite 200  
Alpena, MI 49707  
(989) 356-4507 or 1-800-221-0294  
www.dhd4.org



**Media Contact:** Cathy Goike  
Public Information Officer  
(989) 358-7970  
[cgoike@hline.org](mailto:cgoike@hline.org)

**For Immediate Release**  
**May 3, 2010**

## Head Lice Reports Up

Several cases of head lice have recently been reported to the health department. “Head lice are a common problem during the school year, especially in the winter months”, said Joshua Meyerson, M.D., Medical Director of District Health Department #4, “They occur at all social levels and are not related to cleanliness”. Children can get head lice from close contact with an infested person or by sharing hats, clothing, combs and hairbrushes. The most common symptom is intense itching of the scalp. Head lice do not transmit diseases to humans but scratching can result in infection.

The favorite site for lice and nits (lice eggs) are the nape of the neck and behind the ears. If you suspect your child has lice, examine this area using a magnifying glass and flashlight. Actual head lice are hard to see because they are tiny and few in number. Nits are found on the hair close to the scalp. Nits are gray white or silvery in color, oval in shape, and the size of a poppy seed. “If one person is infested, all family members should be checked and all infested members treated at the same time”, said Dr. Meyerson.

There are prescription and over-the-counter medications for treatment of head lice. Medications should be applied according to the manufacturers' instructions. Because all lice and nits may not be killed with the initial treatment, a second treatment is usually recommended 7-10 days later to kill newly hatched lice. Never use home remedies such as alcohol or kerosene.

Cheboygan County  
Doris E. Reid Center  
825 S. Huron St., Suite 1  
Cheboygan, MI 49721  
(231) 627-8850  
Fax (231) 627-9466

Montmorency County  
P.O. Box 183  
12265 M-32 W.  
Atlanta, MI 49709  
(989) 785-4428  
Fax (989)785-2217

Presque Isle County  
151 E. Huron St.  
P.O. Box 236  
Rogers City, MI 49779  
(989) 734-4723  
Fax (989) 734-3866

They don't work and may be dangerous. Removal of nits after treatment is not necessary but if attempted for aesthetic reasons can be facilitated with a special fine tooth “Nit Comb”.

At the time of treatment, all bedding and clothing used within the last 72 hours should be dry cleaned or laundered in hot soapy water and machine dried. The hot setting on the dryer should be used. Non-washable items can be sealed in a plastic bag for 35 days or left in below freezing temperatures for 12 to 24 hours. Insecticide sprays, aerosols, and fumigation of the home are not recommended. Only vacuum those areas touched by a child's head such as a car seat or favorite chair. “Remember to clean your child's favorite fuzzy toy as well as headgear, brushes and combs”, added Dr. Meyerson. Although lice may survive for 2-3 days off a person under ideal conditions, they usually die within one day.

The District Health Department #4 is the local health department serving Alpena, Cheboygan, Montmorency and Presque Isle Counties. Its staff is dedicated to preventing disease and injury and promoting healthy communities. For additional information about the head lice, go to [www.dhd4.org](http://www.dhd4.org) or call your child’s physician or a public health nurse at the health department.

\*\*\*\*