

National Selfie Day may create unwanted “friends” -- head lice

Parasites linked to smartphone-photo activities

Contact: media@bannerhealth.com

MESA, Ariz. (June 21, 2018) – As we all take a moment to commemorate National Selfie Day, it may be a good idea to recognize that sharing photos has been linked to sharing head lice.

Mesa pediatrician Ruben Espinoza, MD, who practices at Banner Health Center Mesa, said he has noticed more girls around the ages of 13 and 14 years old coming in with head lice. Typically, younger children have the bugs instead.

Espinoza believes the situation may be caused as when girls huddle together around their cellphone to either shoot photos or share pictures that the lice moved from one head to another.

Espinoza’s observations are backed up a study done last year by Oxford University that showed that children who owned smartphones were more prone to head lice. The study didn’t directly say that using phones caused head lice but saw that there was a link between the two.

Head lice live in hair and are particularly common in four to eleven-year-olds. They cause an itchy scalp and general discomfort and are transmitted via direct head-to-head contact, where they climb from one person's hair to another.

About Banner Medical Group

Banner Medical Group (BMG), Banner Health's employed provider group, is a team of more than 1,300 physicians and advanced practitioners across 65 specialties and more than 3,500 total employees located in Arizona, Colorado, Nebraska, Nevada and Wyoming. BMG providers serve patients in a variety of care settings. BMG primary care providers like pediatricians, internists, family medicine physicians and obstetricians/gynecologists staff Banner Health Centers and Clinics, and BMG specialists care for patients in both clinic and hospital settings. For more information, visit www.BannerHealth.com/Doctors.

<http://bannerhealth.mediaroom.com/selfie>