



# MANAGING HEAD LICE

## A PARENT'S SURVIVAL GUIDE

**To Parents/Guardians:** If your child comes home with head lice, don't panic. Millions of school children contract head lice each year. Children play in close contact with each other. A simple exchange of hats, clothing, brushes, combs and other personal articles can result in transmission of head lice from one child to another. Lice can easily and effectively be treated. You should ask your pharmacist for an effective head lice shampoo or ask your doctor for advice.

- 🪲 Check all members of the family for lice and their eggs. Lice are small grayish-tan wingless insects.
- 🪲 Nits are lice eggs laid the base of the hair shaft nearest the scalp. Nits are firmly attached to the hair shafts and are much easier to see than live lice. Treatments kill head lice, but they do not remove the nits.
- 🪲 Apply the lice treatment to all family members infested with lice. Carefully follow the instructions on the package.
- 🪲 Home remedies such as mayonnaise and petroleum jelly are not effective forms of treatment.
- 🪲 Nit combs, often provided with lice treatments should be used to comb nits and lice from the hair shaft.
- 🪲 After each treatment, checking the hair and combing with a nit comb to remove nits and lice every 2 - 3 days may decrease the chance of self-reinfestation.
- 🪲 Continue to check for 2 - 3 weeks to be sure all lice and nits are gone.
- 🪲 Retreatment is meant to kill any surviving hatched lice before they produce new eggs. Read the shampoo package about retreatment and follow the directions.
- 🪲 Head lice do not survive long if they fall off a person and cannot feed. You don't need to spend a lot of time or money on housecleaning activities. Follow these steps to help avoid reinfestation by lice that have recently fallen off the hair or crawled onto clothing or furniture.
- 🪲 Machine wash and dry clothing, bed linens, and other items that the infested person wore or used during the 2 days before treatment using the hot water laundry cycle and the high heat drying cycle. Clothing and items that are not washable can be dry-cleaned **OR** sealed in a plastic bag and stored for 2 weeks.
- 🪲 Soak combs and brushes in hot water for 5 - 10 minutes.
- 🪲 Vacuum the floor and furniture, particularly where the infested person sat or lay. However, the risk of getting infected by a louse that has fallen onto a rug or carpet or furniture is very small.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT HOW TO IDENTIFY AND TREAT HEAD LICE, PLEASE REFER TO THE FOLLOWING LINKS:

<http://www.cdc.gov/parasites/lice/head/index.html>

<http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/schoolhealth/lice.shtm>