

GUIDELINES FOR THE TREATMENT OF HEAD LICE
SCSD Department of Health Services

If your child was examined and found to have live lice:

- 1) Consult your physician for the appropriate medicated shampoo.
- 2) Read and follow the directions on the box very carefully.
- 3) Comb hair thoroughly with a louse comb to remove all dead lice and eggs. To make combing easier, it may be helpful to apply a crème rinse.
- 4) After your child is treated, bring him/her in to school nurse for follow-up examination prior to sending him/her back to class. Bring the box that the medicine came in and give this to the nurse.
- 5) **REPEAT TREATMENT WITH MEDICATED SHAMPOO EXACTLY 10 DAYS AFTER THE FIRST TREATMENT. This step is essential in preventing a reoccurrence of head lice.**
DATE OF INITIAL TREATMENT _____ DATE OF TREATMENT AT DAY 10 _____
- 6) Check the heads of others living in the home or close contacts using lice combs.
- 7) Follow directions below regarding care of the home.

Care of the home:

- 1) Launder bedding and clothes that have been used by person with head lice during past 48 hours in hot water. Dry in the dryer on hot setting. Dry cleaning clothing and bedding is also effective. Ironing items is helpful.
- 2) Even though there is no scientific evidence that head lice is transferred in any way other than direct head-to-head contact, it is still advised some household items need to be attended to. Toys, personal articles, bedding, other fabrics, and upholstered furniture that cannot be laundered with hot water and a dryer or dry-cleaned, can be kept in a plastic bag for 14 days if there is concern about lice having crawled onto these articles.
- 3) Vacuum floors, carpets, mattresses, and furniture.

If your child's physician states that your child may not use additional medication:

- 1) A note from the physician must be sent to the school nurse.
- 2) Comb hair thoroughly with a louse comb. Most lice will be removed during this first combing.
- 3) Repeat combing every day. Each combing will remove a portion of the remaining lice and some that may have hatched in the meantime.
- 4) Continue daily combing until there has been two weeks without any live lice seen.
- 5) Removal of nits is a personal choice, as these are likely to be all dead or hatched.

Things to avoid:

- 1) Whole house clean-ups. Adult lice can't live off a person's head for more than a day or two.
- 2) Pesticide sprays. They are unnecessary and not worth even the small health risk.
- 3) Mayonnaise, margarine, petroleum jelly, olive oil, tea-tree oil. There is no evidence that this works.
- 4) Cutting your child's hair or shaving their head. It's needlessly upsetting to the child.
- 5) Gasoline or kerosene. These folk remedies kill or maim a few children each year when the volatile fumes accidentally ignite. These substances should NEVER be applied to the hair.

Ways to prevent spread of lice:

- 1) Encourage children not to share head gear, towels, and bedding.

- 2) Soak combs and brushes in disinfectant solution (1/4 cup bleach to 1 gallon of water) for at least 10 minutes. Soaking in shampoo that kills lice or hot water for 5 minutes or soaking in a 2% Lysol solution for one hour also works.
- 3) Have separate storage areas for each child's clothing.

* From the American Academy of Pediatrics, 2005