

# GUIDELINES FOR CONTROLLING A LICE OUTBREAK IN YOUR HOME

Dear Parent:

Head lice can happen to anyone. It is not a sign of having poor health habits or being unclean. The most important fact to remember is that the problem should be quickly treated because delays will only help spread the infestation throughout your family and community. Listed below are instructions for controlling a lice problem in your home.

## SIGNS OF INFESTATION:

Head lice are hard to see but signs to look for are:

- \* A family member persistently scratching the head or back of the neck.
- \* White specks in the hair. Look for whitish eggs which can be mistaken for dandruff. Dandruff is removed easily from the hair or scalp; however nits (eggs) are glued to the hairshaft and very difficult to remove.

## IF LICE INFESTATION IS CONFIRMED:

- \* Call or visit your physician who will advise the most effective shampoo lice treatment. A fine-toothed comb is often needed to remove the dead nits.
- \* Lice and their nits can survive, for a time, off the body (up to 72 hours). Even though your family may have been successfully treated, immediate reinfestation is possible or a fresh infestation of other family members may occur.

## TREATING THE ENVIRONMENT:

- \* Clean all articles that might have lice or nits. Clothes, towels, sheets and blankets should be washed in hot water and detergent or dry cleaned. Items that can't be washed (ie., stuffed animals) can be set aside in a plastic bag for 3 weeks.
- \* Your child's room should be vacuumed.

## TO KEEP LICE FROM COMING BACK:

- \* Instruct your child not to borrow personal items such as combs, brushes, hats, clothing and towels from other people.
- \* Disinfect combs, brushes and similar items by soaking for 1 hour in a solution made from the antilice shampoo.
- \* If one member of your family has head lice, you should inspect all family members every other day for at least two weeks.

- \* Your child may return to school after proper treatment has been completed and all nits have been removed.