

## HOME GUIDE FOR CONTROL OF HEAD LICE

TO: Parent/Guardian

FROM: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_  
School Nurse Phone #

**Recently there have been known cases of head lice identified in your child's classroom.** This informational flyer will help assist in the identification and care of head lice. *When home and school work together, the further spread of head lice can be prevented.* Should you need more information, please contact your primary health care provider, Ventura County Public Health Department @ 981-5101, or your child's school health office personnel.

① **Inform the school if you suspect your child has head lice.**

**What are head lice?** An adult louse is about the size of a flea. It lives on the human scalp and hair, preferring the nape of the neck and areas behind the ears. The adult female louse may live up to one month, laying 10 or more eggs (nits) a day during its lifetime. Nits are small, grayish-white, and oval in shape. Nits are attached to a shaft of hair close to the scalp by a cement-like substance, hatching in about one week. Lice cannot fly or jump from person to person, but they do crawl quickly. Head lice are primarily transmitted by close contact (head to head) with a person who has head lice. It can be acquired by: using combs, brushes and scrunchies, lying on carpets or beds, resting the head against upholstered furniture and wearing garments that have been used by an **infested person**. Any person may become infested with head lice under suitable conditions. Length of hair does not seem to be a factor in transmission.



### What can you do?

1. **Regularly check** the heads of family members for signs of active lice infestation. The most common symptom is itching and/or redness at the nape of the neck or behind the ears. Nits are commonly found less than a ¼ inch from the scalp on a shaft of hair during active infestation.
2. **When active head lice are suspected**, treat with pediculicides. They can be purchased over-the-counter or prescribed by your primary health care provider. As recommended by the Ventura County Public Health Department, a permethrin-based product is the current treatment of choice while a pyrethrin-based product is considered the next best treatment.
3. **Directions must be followed carefully** for whichever product is used.
4. **Remove nits** by using a special wire comb or simply sliding the nit off the entire hair shaft between fingernails. Even after treatment, nits do not easily fall off. Several over-the-counter products may help to remove nits.

### Care of the home environment.

- Upholstered furniture and carpets, in **daily** use, should be vacuumed **daily**.
- Washable clothing in direct contact with a person infested with head lice must be washed in hot, soapy water.
- Drying articles at high heat for at least 20 minutes will also destroy nits.
- Non-washable articles can be dry cleaned, placed in a dryer at high heat for 20 minutes, or stored in a sealed plastic bag for two weeks.
- Disinfect combs and hairbrushes that were used by the infested person.
- Remind young people not to borrow or share combs, brushes, and articles of clothing.

**The use of chemicals to fumigate a room is NOT recommended.**



1. **SCHOOL ROLE:** Trained school personnel check for head lice of children referred. When head lice are identified, children are sent home from school for proper care. Each case is monitored and rechecked in seven to ten days or as needed.
2. Classroom and staff education is conducted as necessary to help prevent the spread of head lice.

### A CHILD MAY RETURN TO SCHOOL WHEN:

Trained school personnel determine whether or not a student is free from a current head lice infestation.

**A CHILD SHOULD NOT MISS MORE THAN 2 DAYS OF SCHOOL AFTER BEING IDENTIFIED WITH HEAD LICE INFESTATION.**

Source Document: SCHOOL NURSE GUIDELINES for THE CONTROL OF PEDICULOSIS (Head Lice), July 2000