

## PARENTS' TIP SHEET FOR TREATMENT OF HEAD LICE

Three steps are required in the treatment of head lice:

### 1. KILL THE LICE

- \* If you do not understand the instructions, or if you have problems providing the necessary treatment, please contact the School Nurse.
- \* Carefully read and follow product information exactly. Do not use too much or too little of the product.
- \* Do not treat family members or contacts who do not have head lice, unless instructed to do so by a health professional.
- \* Call your doctor for advice on selecting a lice killing product if your child is allergic to ragweed or chrysanthemums.
- \* Do not treat pets. Head lice cannot survive on pets.
- \* Apply some lice killing products to dry hair, others to damp hair. **Please read the directions carefully!** Apply the product as the child leans over the sink.
- \* Avoid exposing the rest of the child's body to the lice killing products. Do not apply while the child is in the shower or bathtub.
- \* Provide a towel to cover the eyes. Do not use lice killing products near the eyes.

### 2. REMOVE THE NITS

- \* Although it takes time, and is usually difficult, remove all nits for complete treatment. Dead nits cling to the hair and cause uncertainty about new lice.
- \* Most products do not kill all the nits. Survivors will hatch within 7-10 days, as a new cycle.
- \* Settle your child in a chair to read a book or to watch a video when removing the nits. Work near a window or other good light source.
- \* A fine-toothed comb is helpful, but many nits will have to be stripped from the hair shaft by hand.
- \* Grasp the nits between the thumb and finger, and slide them off the hair shaft.
- \* Nits and hairs that have been removed may be placed in a garbage can, or flushed down the toilet.
- \* Nits can be removed from individual hairs using blunt scissors or tweezers. However, it is **not** necessary to cut a child's hair.
- \* Most lice killing products require a second treatment in 7-10 days to kill any newly-hatched lice before they mature and reproduce.
- \* Check your child's hair daily for nits/lice for several weeks after treatment.

### 3. CLEAN THE ENVIRONMENT

- \* Machine wash all washable clothing (coats, scarves, hats, etc.) and bed linens which have been in contact with the infested person during the last three days. Articles should be washed in HOT water and dried in a HOT dryer. Non-washables should be dry cleaned.
- \* Articles that cannot be washed or dry cleaned can be sealed in plastic bags for 14 days, then removed and dusted for any dead nits/lice. Lice and their eggs will die if kept away from people for 2 weeks.
- \* Combs and brushes should be soaked in a lice killing shampoo for one hour and then rinsed with hot water.
- \* Rugs, upholstered furniture, and mattresses (and any other personal items that cannot be washed) should be carefully vacuumed to pick up any living lice or nits attached to fallen hairs. Dispose of the vacuum cleaner bag once all areas have been vacuumed.
- \* Insecticide sprays should **not** be used because they may be harmful to family members and pets, and are of questionable benefits.
- \* Vacuum and damp wipe the interior of cars and infant seats.
- \* Don't be ashamed to talk about lice with other parents. Be sure to tell the parents of any child who may have recently spent the night with your child. Parental cooperation will help control this problem.