



**THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF GREENVILLE COUNTY  
MEDICAL HEALTH SERVICES**

Dear Parent and Students:

Based on our experience in the county schools, it was found that head lice have become a growing problem. This is reportedly true across the nation as well. Lice do not respect race, religion, age, social status, or education. Though they do not pose a major health hazard, they can be very irritating. This letter is designed to give you some general information about head lice and to enlist your help in preventing a problem in our schools during the coming year.

**HOW DO YOU RECOGNIZE THE PROBLEM?**

1. Itching of the scalp, persistent scratching especially about the neckline and ears.
2. Seeing live lice: These are brown, grayish-white or may assume the color of the person's hair and are about the size of small ants. The lice should not be confused with dandruff which is thin and flaky.
3. Seeing lice eggs (nits) attached to the hair shaft near the scalp: Nits are shiny, grayish-white ovals that look like dandruff or droplets of hair spray but cannot be flicked off.

**HOW DO YOU GET HEAD LICE?**

1. Head lice crawl from one person to another by direct contact. They do not hop, jump or fly.
2. Lice are transmitted by means of combs, hats, wigs, brushes or other objects which come in contact with hair.
3. They can fall on clothing, book bags, backpacks, sofas, rugs, pillows, bed linens and from there crawl into the hair of people who previously were not infested.

**HOW DO YOU CONTROL HEAD LICE?**

It is the responsibility of parents to inspect their children's hair. Schools cannot be expected to assume this responsibility on a regular basis.

1. Do not share hats, coats, head gear, combs, or brushes.
2. Inspect hair weekly or more often for presence of lice and/or nits.
3. If you find lice or nits, treat promptly and according to directions accompanying the product used.

**HOW DO YOU TREAT HEAD LICE?**

1. Inspect the hair of all family members and treat those who are infested. Anyone sharing a bed with an infested person should be treated even if no lice or nits are seen.

## HOW DO YOU TREAT HEAD LICE (cont)

2. Most treatments consist of applying a special medication to the scalp and hair following package directions. These preparations come in liquid form and can be bought in drug stores. Most do not require a doctor's prescription. Read instructions carefully especially noting if preparation is applied to wet or dry hair. **IT MUST BE STRESSED THAT THESE PRODUCTS ARE STRONG CHEMICALS AND THUS SHOULD NOT BE OVER-USED. THESE PRODUCTS SHOULD NOT BE USED ON INFANTS UNDER ONE YEAR OF AGE, PREGNANT WOMEN, OR NURSING MOTHERS WITHOUT A PHYSICIAN'S ADVICE AND APPROVAL.**
3. Nit removal may be aided by soaking the hair with a solution of half water and half white vinegar and applying a damp towel soaked in the same solution for 30 to 60 minutes. A fine tooth comb should then be used to go through each section of hair. Back combing may aid in nit removal or use of a flat head pair of tweezers to remove stubborn nits still clinging to the hair. Hair can then be rinsed in warm water.
4. All clothing (pajamas, underwear, other clothes, hat, etc.) should be laundered in hot water; dry cleaned or sealed in plastic bags for one week.
5. Articles such as combs and brushes should be thoroughly washed in hot water or discarded.
6. To remove lice from rugs, upholstered furniture, car seats, mattresses, etc. vacuum thoroughly and immediately throw vacuum bag away and remove from the home.

## HOW DOES THE SCHOOL TREAT LICE?

If student is discovered to have head lice:

1. The parent is notified
2. The student should be treated for head lice before returning to school.
3. Parent will notify school that student has been treated.
4. In some instances, student in an entire classroom may be checked for lice, however, this is time consuming and an interruption in the instructional program. Parents are expected to assume responsibility of checking their children's hair on a regular basis.
5. The use of insecticide spray in a school setting for treating the environment is not done or advised because of the toxicity and possible allergic reaction of students and/or staff. Thorough vacuuming and cleaning is sufficient at home and school.

School Nurse: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Principal: \_\_\_\_\_