**Prevention and Education**

The parent/guardian has the ultimate responsibility to ensure their child is free of live lice and nits. The parent/guardian should carefully check their child’s scalp and hair frequently.

A head lice infection can be found on any person of any age (primarily ages of 3-11 years), race, gender, or socioeconomic class. Infection is not a sign of poor hygiene or living conditions.

Lice are human parasitic insects, about the size of a sesame seed, that live on the scalp and lays eggs in the hair. Lice do not carry disease.

Lice are fast crawling and range in color, from translucent and/or nearly colorless- with small brownish patches along the sides of the body- to almost totally black.

A female louse can lay 3-5 eggs (nits) per day. Nits attach to the hair with strong quick-setting glue. Nits within ¼” of the scalp are considered viable and will hatch into live lice (Nits should be removed).

A louse can hold its breath and hang on when immersed in water. Just washing the hair does not get rid of lice or nits.

**To Prevent the Spread of Head Lice---Avoid Head-to-Head Contact—Lice cannot jump or fly**. Although not a common source of transmission, one should also avoid sharing articles such as hats, combs, brushes and hair implements (head bands, barrettes, etc.).

**Signs and Symptoms**

\*tickling feeling of something moving in the hair

\*itching, caused by an allergic reaction to the bites

\*sores on the head from scratching

\*the presence of live lice or nits

**Management**

Treatment will require the use of an over the counter (OTC) or prescription medication. READ INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY BEFORE STARTING TREATMENT.

Check the scalp and hair of all members (including adults) of the immediate and extended households. Pay special attention to the crown of the head, behind the ears and at the nape of the neck (where the hair and the neck meet). Treat only those that are found to have live lice or nits. Notify other homes where your child spends extended periods of time (day care, babysitters, etc.).

Consult your health care provider before treating young children and infants, if one is pregnant or nursing, if one has special health conditions such as seizure, neurological problems, asthma, and/or allergies.

Do not use a cream rinse or combination shampoo/conditioner before using lice medicine. Do not re-wash hair for 1-2 days after treatment. Source: CDC Fact Sheet 2005

At the same time treatment and nit removal are performed, the following must also be done:

1. Wash on the HOT cycle all clothing, towels, bed linens, soft toys, used in the last 3 days, by all persons infected. Dry on HOT cycle for AT LEAST 20 minutes.
2. Dry clean or store in tightly sealed plastic bags (14 days) items not machine washable.
3. Vacuum all carpets, upholstery mattresses, and cloth car seats.
4. Soak all combs, brushes, and hair implements for 20 minutes in hot water (130 degrees) or items may be soaked for one hour in rubbing alcohol.
5. Do NOT use lice sprays—this can be harmful.
6. Do NOT use lice removal products to prevent lice.

**NIT REMOVAL IS THE KEY TO SUCCESS**

Nits may be removed using a “nit comb” or a cat flea comb. Taking ½” sections of hair, comb from the scalp out to the end of the hair. Wipe the comb on a wet paper towel. Pin up the completed section and continue with the next section. Nits may be removed by using the fingernails or clipping the individual hairs the nits are attached to. Discard paper towel and disinfect comb when finished. Continue to comb for live lice and nits and check hair daily. Lice hatch EVERY 7-10 days. Change and launder pillowcases, pajamas, and towels during this time.

***Repeated lice infections usually mean: improper use of products, treatment failure/resistance to product, live lice and/or live nits have not been removed properly or failure to regularly inspect the scalp and hair.***