June 2001

Head lice are a nuisance but they do not cause disease or illness. They live on the hair and suck blood from the scalp.

Head lice are tiny insects. They do not have wings, so they cannot fly. Head lice have strong claws and can scratch the scalp and cause irritation.

Some facts about head lice:

- Head lice are tiny insects. They do not have wings, so they cannot fly. Head lice have strong claws and can scratch the scalp and cause irritation.
- Head lice can only survive on human heads. They live on the hair and suck blood from the scalp.
- Head lice must feed every six hours or they will die from dehydration.
- Head lice can only be spread from one person to another by direct head-to-head contact.
- The female louse lays five to 12 eggs per day (up to 300 in her lifetime). Eggs remain strongly attached to the scalp and can be difficult to remove.
- Head lice can only survive on human heads. They live on the hair and suck blood from the scalp.

Understanding Head Lice Management:

to help families detect and treat head lice.

Choosing a head lice comb

Plastic combs
- cost approximately $2
table and gentle for people of all ages to use
- when used with hair conditioner, they remove:
  - most head lice
  - some eggs
  - easily cleaned with an old toothbrush

Metal combs
- cylindrical teeth
- cost approximately $20
gentle on scalp and hair
- when used with hair conditioner, they remove:
  - most head lice
  - most eggs
dental floss will remove the eggs and hair clumps which may clog the base of the comb
- are long lasting

Metal combs
- flat teeth
- cost approximately $8
can scratch the scalp and tangle long hair
- when used with hair conditioner, they remove:
  - some head lice
  - few eggs
can be cleaned with dental floss
- are long lasting

Electronic combs
- cost approximately $45 plus
  the ongoing cost of batteries
- cannot be used on wet hair, therefore cannot be used for conditioner and combing
- cannot be used on babies
- should not be used by people with epilepsy, heart disease, pacemakers
- remove head lice from very short hair only
- do not remove the eggs
- clean the teeth with the small brush provided

Head lice are tiny insects. They do not have wings, so they cannot fly. Head lice have strong claws and can scratch the scalp and cause irritation.

Understanding the life cycle of a louse helps with deciding treatment options and educating customers.
Detection and treatment of head lice

1. To detect head lice, check weekly and every 2 days if a close contact has head lice, for early detection of head lice.

2. Find live lice? Apply an effective treatment

   - Conditioner and combing method: Can be used to detect and/or treat head lice.

   - Chemical treatment: Select a product with either of the active ingredients from the four groups listed in the table of chemical products on the back page. Advise client on:
     - Use only when live head lice found.
     - Possible side effects.
     - Correct application.
     - Checking for effectiveness.
     - Keeping record of results of product.
     - No insecticide will kill the eggs.

3. After starting a treatment and until the head lice are under control:
   - Reporting to close contacts immediately and tell the school.
   - Avoid head-to-head contact.
   - Sharing hats presents no risk.
   - A hot wash can be used for pillow cases, however, they are very low risk in spreading head lice.
   - Wash combs and hairbrushes after use in very hot water (just after boiling) for at least 30 seconds.
   - Keep long hair tied at the back.
   - Avoid sharing personal hair items.

Under good light and with a magnifying glass, look carefully for lice on the comb, the tissue or material. Note that recently hatched lice are hard to see. You may see eggs. Remove all lice and any eggs from the comb after each stroke. Place the tissues into a bag, seal and dispose. Scrub combs (using an old toothbrush) and wash material with hot water (just after boiling) for at least 30 seconds to kill lice. Rinse conditioner from hair. Repeat condition and combing every 2 days until you find no more head lice for 10 consecutive days.

After first application: Eggs will be present. In 7 days use conditioner and combing to detect lice. If lice are found, apply product again.

After second application: If there are still lice, apply product again in 7 days.

After third application: If lice are still present, continuing using the conditioner and combing only, every 2 days until no head lice are found for 10 consecutive days.

There is no need to pest control your house.

Remember that ANYONE can catch head lice.

Check weekly, treat quickly and tell the school.