

## STEPS TO HELP KEEP HEAD LICE OUT OF YOUR CHILD'S HAIR

- If you have been exposed to head lice, check your head every day for 2 weeks to make sure you are not infested.
- Check with all family members for lice and lice eggs (nits). Only those infested should be treated with pediculicide.
- Pediculicide – the shampoos and cream rinses are no longer considered 100% effective in treating head lice.
- Consult your physician or pharmacist before using pediculicides, especially if you are pregnant, nursing, have allergies or asthma. Never use lice treatments on or near the eyes.
- If a pediculicide did not work the first time, it is unlikely that more treatments will be effective. If you use a pediculicide, follow the directions on the package carefully and never use more than the recommended dose. Remember pediculicides contain insecticides and must be used with caution. Never use kerosene or gasoline.
- Smothering head lice with olive oil is an excellent treatment option for eliminating pediculicide resistant head lice. The olive oil treatments must coincide to disrupt the life cycle of the louse. Olive oil can also make removal of nits easier.
- Vacuuming is the safest and best way to remove lice or fallen hairs with attached nits from furniture, rugs, stuffed toys, and car seats. Simply storing clothing or toys in a sealed plastic bag for 10 days is also effective. The Centers of Disease Control recommend against using any lice sprays.
- Wash all bedding and recently worn clothing. Wash clothing in hot water and dry in a hot dryer. Combs and brushes should be soaked in hot, soapy water for 30 minutes.
- Check your child for head lice and nits often. Make checking for head lice and nits part of routine hygiene.
- **Notify your child's school, babysitter, day care provider, and friends' parents as this is an important step in preventing reinfestation.**

REMOVE ALL NITS. While tedious and time consuming, this will assure total lice treatment. Separate hair into sections. Use a fine-toothed nit comb to go through small sections of hair. If necessary, snip the hair shaft to which the nit is attached. You can also use your fingernails to slide the nit down the shaft of the hair.

## FACTS ABOUT HEAD LICE

- Head lice are spread through close contact with an infested person or through contact with that person's belongings. Teach your child to never use another person's headphones, combs, brushes, hat or hair accessories.
- Head lice are wingless insects that can't jump or fly. They migrate through direct contact with an infested person or their belongings.
- Anyone can get head lice. Contrary to popular myth, you don't get head lice because of poor personal hygiene. In fact, head lice prefer clean hair.
- Head lice cannot live on pets or outdoors in grass or leaves.
- Itching is the most common symptom of head lice.
- Head lice must have human blood to live and will not survive more than 2 days without their host.
- Head lice are tiny and brown and the largest are the size of a sesame seed. Lice glue their nits firmly to hair shafts. Head lice may be hard to locate because they avoid light.
- The eggs are called nits and usually hatch in 7-14 days. Lice mature in 9-12 days to lay more eggs. Lice may produce up to 150 eggs in one week. The life span of head lice is approximately 21 days.
- Viable nits are tiny, whitish ovals. They are firmly glued to the hair shaft at an angle. Most often near the scalp. Nits do not come off easily. Nits can't be brushed off or removed by normal shampooing or washing.
- Head lice are not dangerous and can be eliminated if you stay informed and persistent with treatment, especially removal of nits.

**PLEASE CONTACT THE AUGLAIZE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT COMMUNICABLE DISEASE PROGRAM AT 419-738-3410 WITH ANY QUESTIONS.**