Instructions for Treatment of Head Lice (Pediculosis)

5 Step Treatment Plan:

1. **(OPTIONAL) Treat head lice and/or untreated nits (eggs) with a head lice killing product.** These products can either be shampoos or crème rinses such as NIX, RID. Follow the manufacturer’s instructions carefully. *Head Lice appear to be resistant at times to head lice killing products. Entomologists have recommended using olive oil as an alternative (see #2).*

2. **Apply Olive Oil to hair.** (Olive Oil smothers or suffocates the head lice). Olive Oil should be applied every 4 days for a total of 6 treatments over a 21 day period (this coincides with the life cycle of head lice).
   - Day #1 date ______
   - Day #5 date ______
   - Day #9 date ______
   - Day #13 date ______
   - Day #17 date ______
   - Day #21 date ______
   
   A. Apply olive oil to dry hair. (Use enough to saturate hair).
   B. Leave olive oil on for a minimum of 8 hours. If applied before bedtime, cover hair with a towel and secure with a clean hat. (Wash hat and towel after using). Do not use plastic shower caps on young children.
   C. After 8 hours, comb nits/lice out of oily hair before shampooing the oil out. (See step 3A).
   D. To remove oil, use a shampoo for oily hair. Apply directly and worked into the oily hair. Then add water to complete the washing of the hair. Repeat shampoo if necessary.

3. **Remove the Nits (eggs)** (see Monona Grove School District Policy: All nits must be removed by the 4th day after initial treatment. This is a very important step to prevent re-infestations as there is no way to tell if the nits are dead or alive without a microscope.
A. After 8 hours of olive oil treatment, leave oil in the hair and comb nits/lice out with a nit comb. Remove oil (see step 2D). Dry hair.
B. Work under good light such as natural sunlight near a window or outdoors if possible. A strong lamp can also be used. If eyesight is a problem, use a magnifying glass/glasses.
C. Using a clean grooming comb or brush, remove tangles.
D. Divide hair into small sections.
E. Pick/comb out all nits. You may use nit removal combs, but fingernails often work best. Go through each section of hair from scalp to the end of hair. Remove lice, nits, debris from comb between passings.
F. Repeat each section of hair looking for attached nits. Nits are oval shaped, usually grayish-white although they can vary in color. Nits are generally laid close to the scalp, but may be found anywhere on the hair shaft.
G. Even under the best conditions, a few nits may be missed. Keep checking every day for at least 2 weeks and regularly thereafter.
H. If additional nits (at least 3-5/day) are discovered, this signals that live lice may still be present. Thoroughly check head for live lice again. Treat with olive oil again.

4. Clean the Environment
Head lice are easily spread. Treating the host(s) and nit removal are the most important steps. However, at the same time, the home must be appropriately cleaned to decrease the spread and reinfestations.

A. Clothing, bedding, or cloth toys can be disinfected by machine washing/drying (use hot cycles). To kill lice and nits.
B. Combs and brushes should be soaked in hot soapy water or lice killing shampoo.
C. Vacuum thoroughly: carpets, pillows, furniture, rugs and articles not easily washed.
D. Dry cleaning can be very expensive. Dolls, toys and other unwashable items can be sealed in a plastic bag for 2 weeks, or freezing for 1-2 days is effective in killing lice/nits.
E. Hard surfaces (chairs, tables etc) may be washed with soap and water.
5. Continue to check for nits daily under good lighting for 2 weeks and regularly thereafter.

Head Lice can be eliminated in your child if they are detected, treated and controlled early. It takes patience and persistence. Please call your school nurse if you have further questions or concerns.