



# ANDERSON COUNTY

## HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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[www.achdonline.org](http://www.achdonline.org)

BRANDON HURLEY, MPH  
*Public Health Director*

ANDREW BUSTIN, MD  
*Board Chairman*

### HEAD LICE INFORMATION LETTER

Dear Parent or Guardian:

The Anderson County Health Department School Health Program would like to take this opportunity to provide you with some education on head lice. Head lice are a common occurrence in school age children. Young children have higher rates of head lice infestation than older children and adults. They are easily passed by being in close contact with someone or by sharing combs, brushes, hats, clothes and helmets.

Lice CANNOT fly, hop or jump. Head lice are small parasitic insects no larger than the size of sesame seeds that live and feed on the human scalp. The classic telltale sign is scratching. Lice require blood from the “host” or human being they are living on in order to survive. Without a host they cannot live more than one or two days.

Nits are small whitish eggs (nits) cemented to the hair shaft—especially at the nape of the neck and behind the ears. It takes approximately seven to ten days for a nit to hatch. Although these eggs look like dandruff, dandruff can be easily removed whereas the eggs can not. All nits must be removed from the hair. Otherwise they may hatch and you will have more lice. Most lice shampoos come with a comb to help with removing the nits. It may be easier for someone to use his or her fingers to pull out the nits. Combing out nits can take awhile, so be patient!!!

When checking your child for lice you should use good lighting such as the natural sunlight or a lamp with the shade removed. Start at the back of the neck and proceed to each side lifting the hair in small sections all over the head. If you find live lice, there are several different brands of shampoo you can buy. Use the medication as directed. If you have Medicaid or health insurance, you can phone your doctor and ask that a prescription be phoned in. With either of the insurances it will be treated as a medication prescription and you will be expected to pay as usual.

If lice are found it is important to thoroughly clean everything. Personal items such as combs, brushes and hair accessories must be soaked in very hot water for twenty minutes, or just throw them away. Clothing, linens and towels should be washed with hot soapy water and completely dried in a clothes dryer using the hot cycle. Non-washable items such as stuffed animals, pillows, etc., can also be placed in the dryer on hot cycle for 20 minutes. If there are items that cannot be washed or placed in the dryer such as helmets etc., they should be placed in an air tight plastic bag for two weeks.

Because lice can live up to 48 hours without a host, sofas, chairs, mattresses, carpets and car upholstery should be thoroughly vacuumed. Throw the vacuum bag away. If you decide to use the lice sprays, please make sure the room is well ventilated due to the insecticides in the ingredients. Be careful!

We recommend that you screen your child regularly in the privacy of your own home. We will continue routine school screenings as well. We also ask that you notify us immediately if head lice or nits (lice eggs) are found.

We welcome the opportunity to teach those of you who do not know how to check your child for head lice. For more information regarding head lice, please visit our website at [www.achdonline.org](http://www.achdonline.org). Working together helps protect all of the children, including your own!

Sincerely,

School Health Nurse