

HEAD LICE WIN AGAIN! Los Angeles County School District Says Yes to Lice Eggs (Nits)

According to the National Pediculosis Association® (NPA), LA County and other communities are abandoning their nit free standard for children in the classroom in favor of chasing lice with pesticides even though lice resistance to the pesticides is scientifically documented.

(PRWEB) May 2, 2006 -- According to the National Pediculosis Association (NPA), Los Angeles County School District is abandoning its No Nit Policy and allowing children to remain in school with nits (lice eggs). This approach mistakenly assumes that lice treatments are 100% effective in killing all the lice and eggs – which they are not - and that all children can tolerate direct and repeated exposures to pesticide treatments – which they cannot.

<http://www.headlice.org/downloads/whynonchem.htm>

LA County and other communities are trading in their nit free standard for children in the classroom in favor of chasing lice with pesticides even though lice resistance to them is scientifically documented. Schools are relaxing restrictions because administrators believe children are missing too much class time. The NPA says they are blaming No Nit Policies for absenteeism when the real cause is the continuing reliance on ineffective shampoo treatments.

In terms of “No Child Left Behind,” children attending school with lice eggs accumulated in their hair will undoubtedly be left behind in the areas of self-esteem and social acceptance -- becoming ostracized by other children as well as adults. Giving up the standard of having children in school lice and nit free for a policy focused on killing lice and leaving their eggs is shortsighted and carries predictable negative ramifications.

The children themselves have not been considered in this policy change. Emily of CT was very upfront: “No way! I wouldn’t want to be friends with someone who always has bug eggs. That’s disgusting.” Another child visiting the school nurse said: “It would be weird for the kids to come to school with nits. I don’t want them left in my hair because I wouldn’t be that comfortable and it’s gross.”

Regardless of policy, children with pediculosis will continue to rely upon the adults in their lives to take the safest most appropriate action to get all the lice and nits out of their hairsooner rather than later. Combing, in fact, offers parents a safe, practical and cost-effective approach that allows them to protect their family regardless of what the school policy does or doesn’t do to help.

The NPA urges a proactive approach (<http://www.headlice.org/downloads/nonitpolicy.htm>) which enables parents to avoid panic and unnecessary use of pesticides by being informed.

Given the absence of a totally effective and safe chemical agent, the best defense against head lice is routine screening, early detection and thorough manual removal of lice and all their eggs. The NPA endorses these traditional communicable disease prevention measures and educates families and communities about managing head lice before outbreaks occur.

The movement to eliminate No Nit Policies across the country began as a product-marketing strategy to promote to pediatricians a prescription lice treatment containing the pesticide malathion <http://www.headlice.org/faq/winning/strangeliceinfo.htm>. Industry consultants put together an “expert panel”



which recommended managing head lice by prescribing pesticides – a decision difficult to condone when safer non-chemical options are available.

For more information about head lice and the non-chemical approach for managing them, visit www.headlice.org. The National Pediculosis Association is a non-profit organization. Proceeds from its resources support NPA's programs of outreach, education, research and independence from industry.

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Contact Information

Jane Cotter

NATIONAL PEDICULOSIS ASSOCIATION

<http://www.headlice.org>

781-449-6487