



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Public Health Service

Centers for Disease Control  
Atlanta GA 30333  
(404) 329-3843  
April 11, 1983

Ms. Deborah Altschuler  
Parents Against Lice  
P.O. Box 149  
Newton, Massachusetts 02161

Dear Ms. Altschuler:

The reasons I discourage the environmental use of insecticides for head louse control are three-fold: 1) there is no evidence that the use of such preparations brings a head louse problem in an institution or home under control faster than not using them; 2) it is my opinion that unsupervised use of insecticides in an institution or home can create potential health hazards themselves that are far greater than the health hazards posed by lice; and 3) the short survival time of head lice away from the human body insures that environmental surfaces would be free of any lice that were accidentally deposited there in about 48 hours. Moreover, our epidemiologic studies indicate that most transmission of head lice occurs by the direct person-to-person route rather than the person-environment-person route.

Sincerely yours,

Dennis D. Juranek, D.V.M., M.Sc.  
Assistant Chief  
Protozoal Diseases Branch  
Division of Parasitic Diseases  
Center for Infectious Diseases