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## ALL ABOUT LICE

Dear Moshava Parents,

The following letter is not one of the most "pleasant" topics we communicate about but is very important.

### **Please read the following carefully!**

Parents are responsible to check their children for lice before departing for Camp Moshava. Head lice are passed from person to person by direct contact or on shared objects (such as headphones, combs, towels etc.). Look for tiny white eggs (nits) on hair shafts, near the scalp especially at the nape of the neck and behind the ears. Head lice themselves are small grayish-tan insects without wings. The most common symptom of infestation is intense itching on the back of the head or the neck. If you are unsure of what nits or lice look like, contact your pediatrician for assistance.

Any child with signs or symptoms should be treated immediately. However, it has become evident recently that many of the currently available over-the-counter and prescription treatments are **INEFFECTIVE** for the ridding of individual lice. The only proven method is continual picking and/or combing with specially designed combs.

As in past years, the staff and campers at Camp Moshava will be checked for lice upon arrival at Camp. **Please note the following if nits and/or lice are discovered:**

1. Parents will be notified immediately.
2. If campers arrive with a heavy infestation of lice/nits, the campers will be sent home immediately in order not to serve as a source for spreading lice throughout the camp.
3. If campers or staff arrives with a limited infestation, the medical staff will make a determination whether to send the person home or not. If allowed to remain, they will be thoroughly "picked" by staff at an hourly fee of \$50.00. This is necessary because hours of nit picking have been spent on campers in past years limiting the ability of our medical staff to focus on the more pressing needs of a population of 750 people that have just arrived in camp. It is likely that we will hire a temp nurse from Honesdale to do the picking.

In general, it is important that the need for proper hygiene and cleanliness be stressed to your children. It should also be stressed that kippot, hats, brushes & combs, hair accessories and pillows not be shared. The medical staff and Administration of Camp Moshava would like to **PREVENT** any unnecessary embarrassment to any child or staff member. Therefore, your diligence in checking your children before they are sent to camp will be greatly appreciated!!!

## **20 HEAD LICE FACTS YOU SHOULD KNOW!**

### A Public Service from SawyerMac Productions

1. Head lice have been around since the beginning of recorded time.
2. Head lice do not come from the dirt or air or spontaneous generation. Head lice come from other head lice, just like every other species.
3. Head lice are contracted by head-to-head contact with an infested person or through contact with that person's belongings.
4. Pets do not transmit head lice to humans or vice versa.
5. Head lice can live on a human head for up to 48 hours and a louse lives on a head for approximately 30 days.
6. Nits (lice eggs) are attached to one side of a hair shaft at an angle. Nits are usually white to light grey in color and do not come off easily. Tip - if it crumbles in your fingers, it is probably not a nit.
7. A hatched nit needs a human blood meal within 45 minutes to survive
8. Head lice like clean, healthy heads the best!
9. If you have been exposed to head lice, check your head every few days for 3-4 weeks to make sure you are not infested.
10. Pediculicides - the shampoos and creme rinses used to treat head lice - are no longer considered 100% effective.
11. 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 or leave it on the head longer than directed.
12. Never use products containing Lindane, a powerful neurotoxin banned for use in the United Kingdom and given a thumbs down by Consumer Reports.
13. The Centers of Disease Control recommend against using any lice sprays because of the danger to small pets and children.
14. Besides the danger, lice sprays contain pyrethrin which is no longer effective in killing head lice.
15. Smothering head lice with olive oil is an excellent treatment option for eliminating pediculicide resistant head lice.
16. Manual nit picking is a necessary part of any lice treatment program.
17. No comb alone will get rid of head lice.
18. Do not go crazy cleaning your house. Clean once and then concentrate on heads.
19. Please inform the school, and/or daycare and parents of your child's playmates if you discover head lice on your child.