What to do if your child comes home with head lice:

Don't panic. Anyone — adult or youngster — can get head lice. It has nothing to do with cleanliness and does not reflect poorly on you as a parent. The problem is easily managed. Just follow the instructions below:

1. **Check every member of the family.**
   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 are small grayish-tan insects without wings. Any family member with lice or nits must be treated.

2. **Use an effective head lice treatment.**
   Several are available without a prescription. The creme rinse requires just one application and protects against reinfection for up to two weeks. Shampoo treatments require a second application 7-10 days after the first, are less effective and offer no extended protection. Ask your pharmacist for more information.

3. **Remove all nits.**
   - Coming can be tedious and can take hours
   - Divide hair into sections
     - Hold hair sections at ends
     - Start as close to the scalp as possible
     - Comb hair repeatedly until all nits are gone
     - Pin back clean sections as you go
   - Dispose of all tissues and the nit comb

4. **Wash clothes, bed linens, and towels.**
   Use hot water and dry on hot cycle for at least 20 minutes. Items not machine washable must be dry cleaned or stored at room temperature in a tightly sealed plastic bag for at least two weeks. Items such as headphones and helmets should be similarly bagged and stored.

5. **Soak combs, brushes, etc. in hot water.**
   The hotter the better, but at least 130°F. Items should be allowed to soak for at least 10 minutes.

6. **Vacuum everywhere.**
   To make sure the rest of your home is louse free, you should vacuum carpets, pillows, mattresses, upholstered furniture, and even the car seats. Dispose of vacuum bag.