

Straight Talk on...Head Lice

One of the most important things we teach in the Alien In-Line program is the importance of wearing a helmet while in-line skating. Failure to wear a helmet has been identified as a significant factor in the few in-line skating fatalities that have occurred in North America since 1985, so we take helmet wearing very seriously. During the course of our program we require all participants to wear a certified helmet (bicycle, skateboard "bucket" style and hockey helmets with face mask removed are all ok) at all times with no exceptions, and we provide enough helmets to outfit each entire class.

The Problem

We are aware that the use of shared headwear (such as certified helmets used in the Alien In-Line program) can be a factor in the spread of head lice...but cannot change our helmet policy. Head injury is still a much more serious health issue than head lice, after all.

Some Solutions

There are several pesticide based cleaning products that can be used to control head lice. Alien In-Line has chosen NOT to use these strong chemical products on our equipment, first because of allergy concerns, but also because the overuse of such pesticides is bad for the environment and is helping create a strain of "super-lice" which have developed a resistance to anti-lice products. Head lice experts strongly recommend use of pesticide-based anti-lice products only in cases of active infestation and not as a preventative measure.

We can provide paper Sani-caps at a nominal cost if requested by school administration, but with the warning that they do not provide an absolute barrier, and can actually create a greater risk of lice transfer if used improperly.

The BEST Solution

The most effective way to avoid the spread of head lice is for each student to bring and use his or her own certified helmet for the Alien In-Line program. Any student who owns in-line skates or a bicycle - or who participates in hockey, ringette, skiing or snowboarding (which covers most kids in Calgary), should already own and wear a certified helmet - bringing it to class for our program should not be difficult.

For those who do not already own a certified helmet...maybe now is a great time to invest in what may well be the most important piece of sports equipment your child will ever own. Helmets may be purchased at any bike shop, sporting goods store, department stores, or our in-line skate specialist friends at www.shop-task.com, and whether it needs protection from harsh pavement or crawling critters, isn't a child's head worth a few dollars?