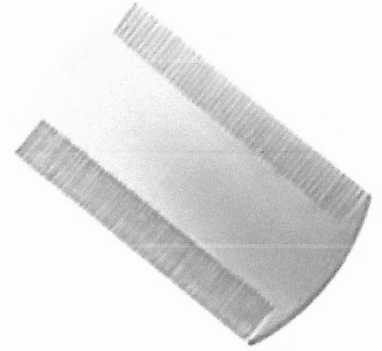


Head Lice guidelines for families

(Please keep for future reference)



A text message reminder will be sent out, should an outbreak occur in your child's class.

Head lice are tiny insects that live in human hair. They are particularly common in children.

Head lice are whitish to grey-brown in colour and smaller than the size of a pinhead when first hatched. When fully grown they are about the size of a sesame seed.

They can't fly, jump or swim and are spread by head-to-head contact, climbing from the hair of an infected person to the hair of someone else.

A head lice infestation is not the result of dirty hair or poor hygiene. All types of hair can be affected, regardless of its length and condition.

Head lice only affect humans and cannot be passed on to animals or be caught from them.

Life cycle of head lice

A female head louse lays eggs by cementing them to hairs (often close to the root), where they are kept warm by the scalp. The eggs are pinhead-size and difficult to see.

After 7 to 10 days, the baby lice hatch and the empty eggshells remain glued in place. These remains are known as nits.

Nits are white and become more noticeable as the hair grows and carries them away from the scalp.

Head lice feed by biting the scalp and feeding on blood. They take 9 to 10 days to become fully grown. Head lice normally only crawl from head to head when they are adults or nearly mature.

A female head louse may start to lay eggs from 9 days after she has hatched. Therefore, to break the cycle and stop them spreading, they need to be removed within 9 days of hatching.

Treating head lice

Head lice can usually be effectively treated with lotions or sprays designed to kill head lice, or by wet combing, using a specially designed head lice comb.

Wet combing can be used without lotions or sprays, but it needs to be done regularly and can take a long time to do thoroughly.

Lotions or sprays can be used as an alternative. However, to be totally effective they need to be applied correctly and thoroughly. Your pharmacist will be able to recommend an over-the-counter lotion or spray and give you advice about how to use it correctly.

You should only treat hair after live head lice have been found. Do not treat "just in case". However, once confirmed, take immediate steps to treat head lice.

Cautions

Always read the instructions on the pack or leaflet that comes with a head lice treatment.

Detection combing

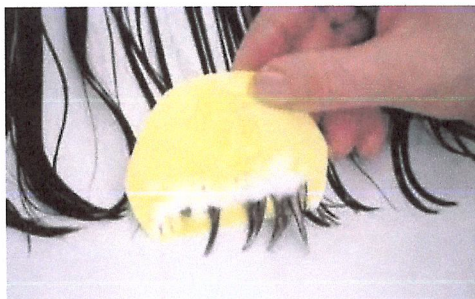
Detection combing can be carried out on dry or wet hair. Less preparation is needed to comb dry hair, but wet combing is more accurate because lice remain motionless when wet.

You can be confident of an active infestation if you find a live louse in the hair. If you're still unsure, you can attach any lice you find to sticky

tape and take it to your pharmacist, GP or practice nurse for confirmation.

Wet detection combing

- Wash hair using ordinary shampoo and apply plenty of conditioner. Use a wide-toothed comb to straighten and untangle the hair.
- Once the comb moves freely through the hair without dragging, switch to the detection comb. Make sure the teeth of the comb slot into the hair at the roots with the bevel-edge of the teeth lightly touching the scalp.
- Draw the comb down to the ends of the hair with every stroke and check the comb for lice.
- Remove lice by wiping or rinsing the comb.
- Work methodically through the hair, section by section, so that the whole head of hair is combed through.
- Rinse out the conditioner and repeat the combing procedure in the wet hair.



Dry detection combing

- Use an ordinary comb to straighten and untangle the hair.
- Once the comb moves freely through the hair without dragging, switch to the louse detection comb. Comb the hair from the scalp to the ends, combing each section of hair three or four times before moving on to the next section.

- Look for lice as the comb is drawn through the hair. If you see a louse, trap it against the face of the comb with your thumb. This will stop the louse being repelled by static electricity as the comb is removed from the hair.
- Continue combing the hair section by section until the whole head has been combed through.

Checking the rest of the family

If you discover head lice in your child's hair you should check the rest of the family and alert close friends.

Preventing head lice

It's difficult to prevent a head lice infestation because head lice are spread by head-to-head contact.

Regular detection combing, for example, on a weekly basis, is the best way to find new lice quickly.

Lotions and sprays do not prevent head lice infestations and should only be used if a live louse has been found on or your child's head.

Head lice and school

There is no need for children with head lice to be kept away from school.

Please contact school to make us aware and we can then send out an advisory text to other families.

Tel: 01469 530350

