

# Happy to be on ANY Head

Head lice are tiny (pin-head sized) grey-brown, wingless insects which live by sucking blood from the scalp. Their eggs are laid glued to the base of the hair and are known as nits. Head lice can be found in all hair colours and types - long, short, straight, wavy or curly. They are also not fussy whether hair is dirty or clean.



## Detection of head lice

**Control of head lice starts at home, children need supervision with hair washing and combing.**

Infestation often causes itching of the scalp but may also go unnoticed. Sometimes but not always, lice may be visible in the hair. Head lice cannot be killed with normal shampoo or combing.

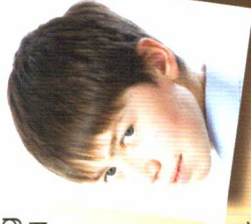
Wet combing, as described below, after washing the hair, is an excellent way of detection and treatment.

**It is important to check regularly every week including school holidays.**

## Detection method

**You will need... shampoo, conditioner, wide-toothed comb, head lice detection comb, towel, kitchen paper.**

1. wash the hair using ordinary shampoo.
2. use conditioner to make combing easier.
3. lightly towel dry hair.
4. remove tangles with a wide-toothed comb.
5. using detection comb, part hair into small sections and comb hair from scalp to the end.
6. wipe comb each time with a piece of kitchen paper and check for live lice.
7. repeat steps 5 and 6 and ensure the whole head is combed.
8. clean comb under running water, kill and wash away any lice found.



## What to do If a living head louse is found...

- Check the whole family and advise anyone else who has had close contact with your child.
- Treat all members of the family who have lice at the same time.



## Non medicated treatment

### Wet combing method...

Repeat steps 1-8 of the detection method every 3 days for 2 weeks. Combing every 3 days removes the lice before they are mature enough to lay eggs or transfer to another head.

**Carry on with routine weekly detection after all lice have been removed.**



## Medicated treatment

Use only a medicated lotion approved by a G.P. pharmacist or nurse.

Make sure you have enough lotion to treat all those with live lice (one bottle for each head to be treated). More may be needed for very thick hair.

Shampoos are not recommended as they are less successful in killing lice.

For children under 2 years old and anyone with a medical condition, eg. pregnancy, asthma or eczema, consult your G.P. before using a medicated treatment.

## Medicated treatment method

**You will need... medicated lotion, detection comb, towel, kitchen paper.**

1. the room should be well ventilated (open windows) with good light.
2. keep well away from naked flames, cigarettes or sources of heat; do not use a hair dryer.
3. apply lotion exactly as directed in the instructions.
4. ensure the lotion/fluid is applied thoroughly to the whole scalp.
5. leave the lotion on the head for the length of time recommended in the instructions to make sure the head lice are killed.
6. comb out the dead and stunned head lice with a detection comb.
7. repeat the treatment in 7-10 days, using a second bottle of lotion.
8. check the hair 2 days after the second treatment. If there is still evidence of head lice ask your school nurse, health visitor, practice nurse or pharmacist for further advice.
9. keep a record of the treatment used and the result.
10. carry on with weekly detection combing after treatment.



**Be aware no treatment can guarantee complete egg-kill.**

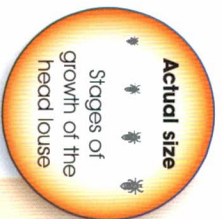
**Medicated lotions or shampoos should not be used to prevent infestation with head lice.**

**Only individuals who have live head lice need to be treated.**

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## Head Lice – the facts

- life size adult louse
- live only on human heads.
- like warmth close to the scalp.
- do not jump or fly.
- only move from head to head when there is close contact.
- EGGs are laid close to the scalp and are grey-brown oval shapes.
- NITS are a dull colour and found further along the hair.



- are not fussy about the length of hair or whether it is clean.
- can be found anywhere on the scalp, but especially behind the ears and on the back of the neck.
- are often present for months before being detected.

### The Head lice life-cycle:

- a head louse usually hatches 7 to 10 days after the egg is laid.
- a newly-hatched head louse becomes full grown in six days.
- younger lice tend to stay on the head where they hatch.
- full grown lice move from head to head.
- a female head louse mates and starts laying eggs on day 7 after she herself hatched.

### Breaking the life-cycle:

- **Preventing head lice from spreading:** it is important to remove the lice before the sixth day from hatching.
- **Preventing head lice from reproducing:** new eggs can be laid from day seven after hatching.

**Important: if left alone they can infest many others so seek treatment immediately.**

### Remember Anyone can catch head lice...

- but everyone needs to know how to manage and remove them.
- always check your contacts: parents, grandparents, brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts, cousins, friends, baby-sitters and share information.

### For more advice and support contact:

your school nurse, health visitor, local pharmacist or:

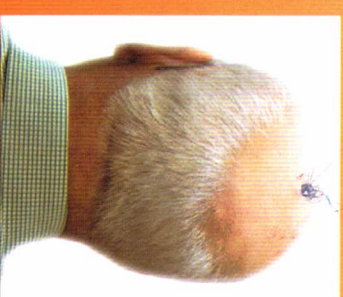
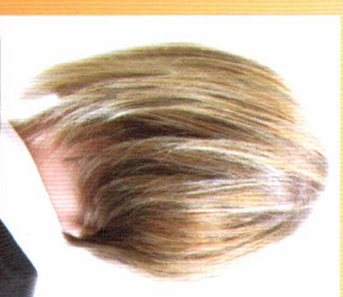
**Bug Busting helpline: 0207 686 4321**

**Community Hygiene Concern: www.chc.org**

**NHS Direct: 0845 4647 www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk**



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