

School Nurses



Care for Kids

Head Lice



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Headlice

- What are they ?

Small six legged wingless insects.

Pin head size when they hatch to sesame seed size when fully grown. They are grey/brown in colour and often difficult to detect.

They can cause itching when they first arrive on the head but this is not always the case.



- Lice hang on tight to the hair, usually close to the scalp where there is warmth food and shelter from detection.
- Younger lice tend to stay on the head which they have hatched on for about 6 days, however fully grown lice take the opportunity to move from head to head dur contact.



- A female head louse lays eggs by cementing them to hairs (often close to the root), where they're kept warm by the scalp.



- 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 nine to 10 days to become fully grown.
- A female head louse may start to lay eggs from nine days after she's hatched. Therefore, to break the cycle and stop them spreading, they need to be removed within nine days of hatching.



Detection

- To confirm an active head lice infestation, a louse must be found through a reliable, accurate method, such as detection combing.
- Detection combing is the best way of finding head lice. It involves using a special fine-toothed head lice comb with a tooth spacing of 0.2-0.3mm to comb through the hair.
- The comb can trap even the smallest lice. It works better on wet hair but can also be used on dry hair.





Treatments



- 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.

- *If you get your treatment product from a pharmacy, ask the pharmacist to go through the instructions with you.*
- *If you buy off-the-shelf, read the information on the pack to find out how many applications per infested head are required.*
- **Remember** that whatever the product, **you always have to check for lice on days 5,9 and 12/13 and remove them to avoid the three risks of continuing infestation.**
- Metal nit combs are not recommended for louse detection and removal.
- **Inform yourself what a treatment entails before you choose one**

