



Head Lice

It is a word we all dread, but the fact is head lice are a very common problem. In a school, a child with head lice can spread the infestation quickly and so it is important to deal with the problem as soon as it is discovered. The school understands that this issue causes distress to many parents and children and we do all we can to work towards eliminating the problem in school. We would ask all parents to be extremely vigilant about head lice, treating their children at the first sign of any infestation. We will contact you privately if we think there is a problem, but we are not allowed to examine pupils' hair so do rely on your co-operation. If you need any advice, then please contact our Family Liaison Officer who can put you in touch with the School Nurse who is available to advise parents.



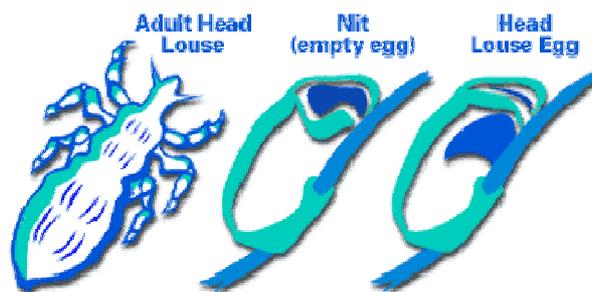
Here we will try to answer some of your questions:

What are head lice?

They are insects that live on a human's hair. The human head louse is a sucking louse.

What do they look like?

They are small, greyish-brown wingless insects, roughly the size of a sesame seed. They have short legs with hooks that help them to hold onto the hairs on our heads. The adult lice lay about ten eggs a day, which are glued onto strands of hair. When the egg hatches the empty egg is left behind. This is the nit.



What do head lice eat?

Head lice only eat human blood. Lice need to feed about five times a day. They suck blood from a human head by making a hole in the skin.

How do head lice pass from human to human?

Head lice cannot jump, leap or fly. They can only spread by head to head contact, where the lice simply walk from one head to another.

Why do head lice make your head itch?

As a louse feeds, it squirts a sort of anaesthetic liquid onto the head. Afterwards this liquid makes the hole itch.

Confirming the Presence of Head Lice :

In order to confirm the presence of head lice you will need a fine tooth detector comb, and it is a good idea to use conditioner on the hair to make combing it easier. If you do use conditioner remember to wipe the comb with tissue paper after every



stroke to check for lice and to rinse the conditioner off the hair when you have finished combing.

1. Wash the hair well and leave the hair wet but not dripping.
2. Comb the hair with an ordinary comb to straighten it and then use a detector comb. Start at the top of the head and, making sure the comb is touching the scalp, slowly draw the comb towards the end of the hair.
3. Check the teeth of the comb carefully for head lice (eggs or nits).
4. Repeat steps 3 and 4, working your way round the head.
5. If you find something you are unsure about, stick it to a piece of paper with clear sticky tape and take it to your local pharmacist or GP.

Three symptoms that may indicate your child has head lice:

- **Itchy scalp** - if your child keeps scratching their head or complains of itchiness
- **Red patches on the scalp** - these are caused by scratching and may become infected
- **White dandruff like spots attached to the hair** which could be nits, the eggshells from hatched lice.





How to treat head lice :

Treatment should only be given if a living, moving louse is seen on the head or comb. There are two methods of treatment: 1) Wet combing 2) Pharmacist lotions

Wet combing

This method involves coating the hair with conditioner and combing with a detection comb for approximately 30 minutes, 3 or 4 times a week for 3 weeks. However, there is no clinical evidence to show that wet combing effectively eradicates head lice.

Lotions

These can be bought from your pharmacist and contain an insecticide. Full instructions will be enclosed with the lotion.

Facts about Head Lice

- Head lice are small, greyish brown insects that live on the human head;
- They grow up to the size of a sesame seed and have special hooked feet that allow them to cling to individual hairs.
- A female louse can lay up to 8 eggs a day and they take about 10 days to hatch.
- Nits are the empty egg shells that lice have hatched from.
- A head louse lives for up to one month.
- Head lice cannot jump, swim or fly. They can only walk.
- Two heads need to be touching for a head louse to walk from one to the other.
- You cannot catch head lice from pets as they do not live on animals.
- You don't need to disinfect clothes or furnishings as head lice die when away from a human head.

*Remember, the best way to stop infection is for families to check their heads regularly
(once a week if possible) using detection combing.*

Further Information

There are all sorts of sources of information about head lice although many are related to products so you have to be aware of this. You may find the following useful:

www.headliceadvice.net

Lice Advisory Bureau: 020 7617 0817

www.nits.net/bugbusting

Bug Busting helpline: 020 7686 4321

www.lice.co.uk

