



Head Lice Policy, Guidelines and Practice

When a case of head lice is discovered the child concerned will not be isolated from other children or excluded from activities. When the child is collected parents will be sensitively told. A text will be sent to all parents informing them of but no names will be mentioned and confidentiality will be kept at all times.

General Information

Head lice are small insects with 6 legs that live on or very close to the scalp.

They feed by biting the scalp and sucking the blood.

They are only able to move by crawling – they cannot jump, fly or swim!

The head louse is difficult to see as it is only about 3mm long as an adult and is flesh coloured. It only darkens in colour once it feeds.

The female lays 5-8 eggs each day, which are glued to the base of the hair shaft.

Empty egg cases are called nits. They are white and shiny which makes them easier to see than the adult louse. Nits move further away from the scalp as hair grows.

It takes 7-10 days for eggs to hatch after they have been laid and are fully developed into adults about 10 days later. Total life cycle of a head louse is 17-20 days.

The only way to spread lice is via head to head contact.

Wet Combing –

This method should always be used to detect and successfully clear head lice. It does not require the use of any lotions or special treatments:

Use your normal shampoo to wash the hair and then condition it well. For curly hair use oil as wet lice find it difficult to hang on to hair that is slippery from conditioner or oil.

While the hair is still dripping slot a fine toothcomb into the hair at the roots. Hold the comb tight to the scalp and then run down the full length of the hair.

Clear the comb of head lice between each stroke to avoid combing them back into the hair.

Repeat this all over the hair.

It is also advisable to wash and change bed linen, particularly pillow cases, during treatment

and do not share towels and other headwear.

You must wet comb every 3 days for 2 weeks in order to clear newly hatched lice and to stop more eggs being laid.

Lotions

There are several brands of lotion available from chemists or by prescription from your doctor. These are made to kill the lice and their eggs quickly and safely, but for those who suffer from asthma or eczema you will need to ask advice on the best lotion to use. Always follow the instructions included and note that repeated use is not recommended.

Alternative - Essential Oil Treatments (Tea Tree Oil)

Make up a solution of 5 drops of tea tree oil to 5mls of shampoo (e.g. put 50 drops of tea tree oil in a 50ml bottle of shampoo). While the hair is still wet comb through with a fine toothcomb to remove the lice. Repeat this procedure every other day until all signs of lice have been removed.