



HEADLICE INFORMATION LEAFLET

Head lice (Pediculosis) Head lice are small wingless insects which live on the human scalp and may cause itchiness. Head lice cannot jump, fly or swim. They are passed from person to person, through direct, pro-longed head-to-head contact with an infested person. There are three forms of head lice:

- **Nits are head lice eggs** (oval, yellowy white eggs.) Hard to see and may be confused with dandruff. They attach themselves just above the roots of individual hairs. The eggs remain after hatching and many nits are empty egg cases.
- **Nymphs hatch from the nits.** The baby lice look like the adults, but smaller.(flesh coloured insects about 3mm long) They take about 7 days to mature to adults.
- **Adult lice** are about the size of a sesame seed. The legs have hook-like claws to hold onto the hair with. Adults can live up to 30 days.

Vital knowledge about the life-cycle

- A head louse usually hatches 7 to 10 days after the egg is laid.
- A newly-hatched head louse takes 6-14 days to become fully grown, after which they are capable of reproduction.
- Fully-grown head lice take the opportunity to move from head to head during close contact. Younger lice tend to stay on the head for about 6 days where they have hatched.

Breaking the life-cycle

Preventing head lice from spreading:

It is critical to remove the lice before the sixth day from hatching

Preventing head lice from reproducing:

A new generation of eggs can be laid from day seven after hatching

Our School Nurse recommends the regular use of the

Wet Combing Method to detect and treat



What is WET COMBING?

A way to find and remove head lice by carefully combing through wet hair soaked with conditioner, using a fine-tooth comb.

Why do WET COMBING?

- Saves money, no harmful chemicals, environmentally friendly.
- Makes finding lice easier because they remain still when wet.
- Using wet combing in a scheduled way removes lice before they are mature enough to lay eggs.

THE WET COMB ZONE 14 DAY TIMETABLE														
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To clear Head Lice you must break the breeding cycle. • This can be done using the Wet Combing method over a 14 day period • The Comb Zone timetable shown below should be followed. 														
	↓ Comb Zone				↓ Comb Zone				↓ Comb Zone	Last of eggs laid before Day 1 will hatch			↓ Comb Zone	Hair clear of lice and empty egg shells are all that remain on the hair.
DAY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14

The WET COMBING method

You will need

- regular shampoo (*not 2 in 1*)
- regular conditioner
- a wide-tooth comb
- a plastic head lice comb (like a pet flea comb) with very small spaces between the teeth

Method

1. Wash hair in the normal way, with ordinary shampoo.
2. Using lots of conditioner, and while the hair is wet, use a wide toothed comb to straighten and untangle hair.
3. Once the comb moves freely through the hair, without dragging, switch to a fine tooth comb. Make sure that the teeth of the comb slot into the hair at the roots and draw down to the ends of the hair with every stroke. The comb must be fine enough to catch the lice.
4. Check the comb for lice after each stroke as you work through the hair section by section.



5. Then rinse out the conditioner and repeat the combing procedure in the wet hair.
6. Repeat this routine every 3 days for 2 weeks, so that any lice emerging from eggs are removed before they mature and spread.

Ideas to help your child understand why combing hair.

- Help your child practice brushing and combing their hair. This increases their confidence and knowledge about taking care of their hair and they will be able to recognize the symptoms of a head lice infestation when it happens.
- Have they a doll or teddy that could be used for combing or brushing it might be easier to start practicing techniques on these first!
- Do you have a pet? Let your child help comb/brush out the fur.
- Try out different shampoos and conditioners to see which smell your child likes the most.
- Explain that you need to know when their head itches or feels funny! (itching is not always present as a symptom)

Remember to check all family members at the same time.

Lotion Treatment - only those with live lice should be treated.

- Check all the family and treat anyone who is found to have lice at the same time, to prevent re-infection.
- 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 long the treatment must remain on the hair to be effective and how many applications per infested head are required. Remember that whatever information is on the pack, you always will have to check for lice on days 3-5 after you use it and again at 10-12 days and remove them to avoid the risk of continuing infestation.