

School Nurse Top Tips

HEAD LICE :

Are Head Lice and Nits the same thing?

Lice are the tiny grey or brown insects that are found in the hair. The lice are about the size of a small seed (i.e. **Sesame seed**) and cling to the hair staying close to the scalp which they live off. These lice lay eggs which take from 7 to 10 days to hatch and each new hatchling takes around 10 days to fully grow to an adult.

Nits are the empty shells left after lice have hatched. It looks very much like dandruff but as it clings to the hair it makes it hard to brush out.

1. Have a look under a good light, such as a lamp or the natural sunlight by sitting at a window or going outdoors.



2. Wash hair and use a conditioner (this makes it easier to comb and lice cannot grip on), then use a comb or hairbrush to remove tangles and divide the hair in sections and fasten off the hair that is not being worked on.



3. Use a 'nit' comb to detect the presence of lice and nits, (pick one up from local chemist). Using the comb, go through each section from scalp to the end of the hair. Clean the comb on each stroke by dipping the comb in a cup of water, or use a paper towel to remove debris from the comb between strokes. The comb should be boiled and left to cool, before use on different people.



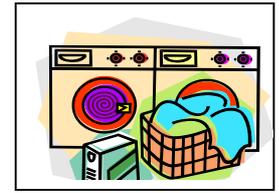
4. Look through each section of hair for attached nits (lice eggs) and live lice. Nits are always oval-shaped. While usually greyish-white they can vary in color. Nits are generally laid close to the scalp but can be found anywhere on the hair shaft.



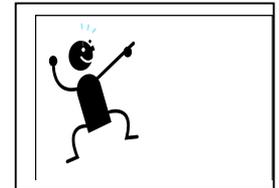
5. Remember, all lice-killing products are pesticides. If you choose to purchase an over-the-counter treatment, follow the directions carefully. Consult your pharmacist or doctor when the child has allergies, asthma, epilepsy, pre-existing medical conditions, or has lice or nits in the eyebrows or eyelashes. Never use a over-the-counter treatment on or near the eyes.



6. Wash bedding and recently worn clothing in hot water and dry in a hot dryer. Vacuuming is the safest and best way to remove lice or fallen hairs with attached nits from upholstered furniture, rugs, stuffed animals and car seats.



7. Even under the best of conditions, a few lice or nits may be missed. Use the comb to check the hair every day; it can take 14 days for one infestation to clear, and then check regularly afterwards. Seeing a nit or two the next day does not necessarily mean re-infestation. However, be sure to remove them immediately.



REMEMBER :

A regular check of your child's hair will go a long way toward controlling the problem. If additional nits (at least 3-5 per day) are discovered, this may signal that live lice may be on the head. When you brush your child's hair in the morning just have a quick check.

- *screen safely and regularly*
- *detect lice and nits as early as possible*
- *remove lice and nits immediately and effectively*
- *avoid panic & unnecessary use of chemicals*
- *keep children in school lice and nit free*



- ***If you have any concerns regarding head lice please contact your pharmacist/chemist.***

• If you have any concerns regarding your Childs Health please contact 01933 414934 – many thanks from your Children & Young Peoples Nursing Team-
Working together, with you, to keep your child healthy.