



Self-care Information

Head lice & nits

Tips on how you can self treat head lice in adults and children

“Supporting you to look after you”

Key advice:

- Avoid head to head contact, or sharing hair brushes if you or your child have head lice.
- The ‘wet combing’ method can be very effective at getting rid of headlice.
- Special combs can be bought online or in pharmacies.
- If the ‘wet combing’ method has not worked, you may need a medicated lotion or spray. These can be bought in the supermarket or at a pharmacy. Speak to your local pharmacy for advice.

What are head lice and nits?

Head lice are small insects that live in the hair, and can be up to 3mm long. They can’t jump or fly, but can walk from one head to another. They soon die when away from hair.



They can be difficult to spot, and the only way to be sure someone has head lice is to find a live louse using a special fine-toothed comb.

Nits are the empty egg cases that can be found in the hair.



Other possible signs of having head lice are:

- Having an itchy scalp.
- Having a rash on the back of your neck.
- Feeling like something is moving in your hair

How do I treat head lice?

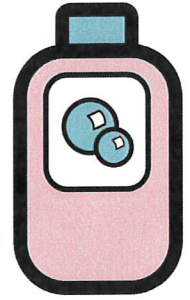
Medicated lotions and sprays may not always be needed, and the ‘wet combing’ method can be very effective at getting rid of head lice.



Let your pharmacist know if you take any other medicines, or if you are pregnant or breastfeeding, as this may affect which treatments you can use safely.

The 'Wet Combing' Method

- Wash your hair with ordinary shampoo.
- Apply lots of conditioner to the hair (any conditioner will do).
- Comb the whole head of hair from the roots to the ends using a special fine-toothed comb (detection comb). These can be bought online or from a pharmacy.
- It usually takes about 10 minutes to comb short hair, and 20 to 30 minutes for long or curly hair.
- Use this method on days 1,5,9 and 13, so you can catch any newly hatched lice.
- Check everyone's hair again on day 17 to make sure they are free of lice.



If you do need medicated treatment, this can be bought from a supermarket or pharmacy. Some medicated treatments may need repeating after a week to kill any newly hatched lice.

Head Lice Facts and Myths

True

- ✓ Head lice can infect both clean and dirty hair.
- ✓ Head lice can infect both long and short hair.
- ✓ Head lice walk from head to head.
- ✓ Head lice only cause itching if you are allergic to the bites or poo.
- ✓ Head lice can be treated without using chemicals.

False

- ✗ Head lice can jump from one head to another.
- ✗ You will always have an itchy head or scalp.
- ✗ Head lice prefer clean hair.
- ✗ Head lice prefer long hair.
- ✗ You need to keep children off school.

Here are some useful links to further information

NHS Website	https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/head-lice-and-nits/
Patient Websites	https://patient.info/childrens-health/head-lice-and-nits https://patient.info/childrens-health/head-lice-and-nits/treating-and-preventing-head-lice-and-nits
Or visit your local pharmacy for advice	

