

What are head lice?



- Head lice and nits are very common in young children and their families. **They do not have anything to do with dirty hair and are picked up by head-to-head contact.** Head lice are small insects, up to 3mm long.





- Head lice eggs (nits) are brown or white (empty shells) and attached to the hair.
- Head lice can make your head feel:
 - itchy
 - like something is moving in your hair
- **The only way to be sure someone has head lice is by finding live lice.**
- You can do this by combing their hair with a special fine-toothed comb (detection comb). You can buy these online or at pharmacies.

Head lice and eggs



How to get rid of head lice



- **Important:**
- **You can treat head lice without seeing a GP.**
- Treat head lice as soon as you spot them.
- You should check everyone in the house and start treating anyone who has head lice on the same day.
- There's no need to keep your child off school if they have head lice.

Wet combing – try first



- Lice and nits can be removed by wet combing. **You should try this method first.**
- You can buy a special fine-toothed comb (detection comb) online or from pharmacies to remove head lice and nits. This can be given from the MAS also.
- There may be instructions on the pack, but usually you:
 - wash hair with ordinary shampoo
 - apply lots of conditioner (any conditioner will do)
 - comb the whole head of hair, from the roots to the ends
- It usually takes about 10 minutes to comb short hair, and 20 to 30 minutes for long, frizzy or curly hair.
- Do wet combing on days 1, 5, 9 and 13 to catch any newly hatched head lice. Check again that everyone's hair is free of lice on day 17.

Medicated lotions and sprays



- Ask a pharmacist for advice if you have tried wet combing for 17 days, but your child still has live head lice.
- They may recommend using medicated lotions and sprays. These kill head lice in all types of hair, and you can buy them from pharmacies, supermarkets or online.
- Head lice should die within a day. Some lotions and sprays come with a comb to remove dead lice and eggs.
- Some treatments need to be repeated after a week to kill any newly hatched lice.
- If lotions or sprays do not work, speak to a pharmacist about other treatments.

Head lice cannot be prevented



- There's nothing you can do to prevent head lice.
- You can help stop them spreading by wet or dry combing regularly to catch them early.
- Do not use medicated lotions and sprays to prevent head lice. They can irritate the scalp.
- There's no need for children to stay off school or to wash laundry on a hot wash.

Available products



- Head Lice detection comb (from £1.99)
- <https://www.superdrug.com/Superdrug/Superdrug-Detecting-Head-Lice-Nit-Comb/p/204904?gclid=EAlaIQobChMluuLJsYel4wIVMyjTCh307wEBEAQYBSABEgKAHvD BwE&gclsrc=aw.ds>
- Dimeticone Lotion 4%- Hedrin
- Malathion Liquid 0.5% - Derbac-M