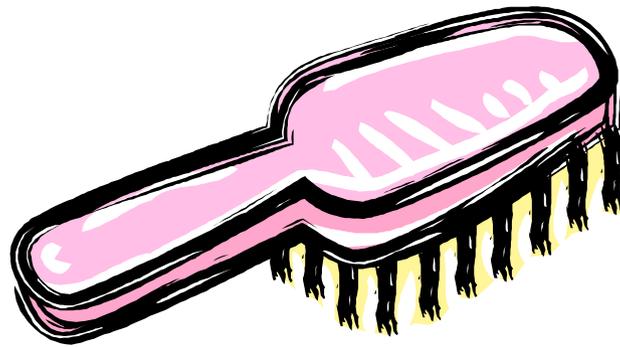


OASIS ACADEMY RYELANDS



HEALTHY HAIR



Like the common cold, anyone can catch head lice. It is a community problem that affects adults and children.

What are head lice?

Head lice are flat greyish-brown insects, the size of a pinhead, which live in the hair. They like to stay close to the scalp for warmth and feed by biting the scalp and sucking blood.

What are nits?

Nits are empty white egg cases. They are not always a sign of live head lice and grow out with the hair.

Detection and prevention:

You only have head lice if you see live lice in the hair. Lice are most easily detected by fine tooth combing wet conditioned hair. If no lice can be found by careful combing of the hair from the roots then there is no need to consider applying head lice lotions/liquids.

When to comb:

Wet comb and check hair regularly – once a week. There may be no itching to warn you that head lice are present. It is very important for everyone to check regularly. Remember – at least once a week.

How to comb:

Wet combing method.

Head lice may be detected by this method. If it is done correctly head lice may be cleared over a 2 – 6 week period.

- Wash hair in normal way with an ordinary shampoo.
- Use a hair conditioner and while hair is wet comb through from roots, using ordinary comb to detangle hair and then use fine tooth comb.

Or:

- Use a light oil e.g. olive oil or grape oil on dry hair and comb through from roots.
- Light oils or conditioner makes combing easier, they do not kill lice.
- Use a fine-tooth comb (strong plastic if possible). The teeth on the comb should be no greater than 0.2mm apart. Check when you purchase these combs from your local pharmacy.
- Systematically part hair and ensure teeth of comb slot into hair at the roots with every stroke, ensuring the comb goes into the nape of the neck and behind the ears.
- Comb hair over a pale sheet of paper, white towel or pillowcase if possible so you can see any lice.
- Clear the comb of lice between each stroke by wiping on a tissue or rinsing under running water.
- If you find any lice, then repeat this routine every 2-3 days for 2-6 weeks so that any lice emerging from the eggs are removed before they can spread or reproduce. This will only work if carried out exactly as described.

Treatment

If you find lice you have two options.

1. Wet combing method.
On hair washed and conditioned or on dry hair to which a light oil has been applied as described above.
2. Use insecticidal lotions.
And then wet comb. Please read instructions very carefully about application of the lotions and note that a further application is recommended after 7 days. You can seek advice from your GP, Pharmacist, Health Visitor or School Nurse. You should ensure that the product you are using is a lotion/liquid which is left on

for 8 hours or more. Shampoos, crème rinses and mousses are not effective.

It is important to use the insecticide again after 7 days to remove any lice which may hatch. Continue to wet comb hair every 2-3 days for a minimum of 2 weeks after the correct use of the lotion to remove dead lice and any lice which may hatch from the eggs.

Do not over use the chemical insecticide lotions – do not use more than 3 times in 3 weeks. Then do not use again within a 6 week period. Continue to comb and this will reduce the need to use a lotion/liquid.

Whichever treatment is used.

- Check the heads of all the family and close contacts and treat using one of the two options described.
- Tell all known contacts – e.g. children's friends, grandparents, aunts, uncles, child minders so they can check their hair and if necessary treat.
- Always continue to comb hair on a regular basis to check for reoccurrence.

Remember

Prevention is better than cure. Check hair at least once a week if head lice are a problem in your area.

Information taken from The Prevention and Treatment of Head Lice leaflet. Croydon Children's trust.