

Head Lice

Head lice are tiny insects that live close to the scalp where they lay their eggs. Un-hatched eggs are darker in colour and usually take seven to ten days to hatch. Hatched eggs (nits) appear white in colour and are harmless.



Detection

Lice are best found by combing wet conditioned hair with a head lice comb from the roots of the hair outwards. Ensure you comb the whole head in small sections at least once a week.



Treatment – should not start unless live lice are seen.

The following treatments have been researched and are effective and safe for those with eczema and asthma:

Dimeticone Lotion 4% (**Hedrin**)

Isopropyl myristate and cyclomethicone (**Full Marks Solution**)

Coconut, anise, and ylang ylang spray (**Lyclear SprayAway**)

} These
} do not contain
} pesticide

Malathion Aqueous Lotion (**Derbac-M liquid**) – contains pesticide.

They are available on prescription or to buy from chemists.

Some Do's and Don'ts

✓ **Do** check everyone in the household and treat all those with live lice together.

✓ **Do** follow instructions carefully when applying treatments. Two applications are required seven days apart. Two to three days after the final application check hair thoroughly using the detection method above then repeat again seven days later. If live lice are found seek further advice from your school nurse, GP or local pharmacist.



✗ **Don't** keep your child off school or feel embarrassed or ashamed.

✗ **Don't** use shampoos, mousses, tea tree oil, essential oils and other herbal remedies that claim to treat head lice.

School nurses are happy to help anyone who is finding it hard to get rid of head lice, they can be defiant and devious little things! Contact your school nurse to arrange to meet at school, the clinic or at home if you prefer.

References

Public Health Medicine Environmental Group (2008) *Head Lice: Evidence-based guidelines based on the Stafford Report 2008 Update*.

Clinical Knowledge Summaries – Head Lice (Online) last accessed 19.4.11 at http://www.cks.nhs.uk/head_lice#-404034