

16. BUT MY CHILD IS STILL SCRATCHING

People can scratch after treatment but it doesn't mean they still have lice. Check your child's head to be sure, but only treat if you find living moving lice. The treatments can make the scalp flaky and itchy. Also, some people scratch just thinking or talking about lice.

17. SHOULD I USE A LOTION 'JUST IN CASE'

No, you should only use the treatment if you find living, moving lice. The treatments are safe but they shouldn't be over used. They can also make the itching worse.

18. IS TEA TREE OIL IS GOOD FOR KILLING AND PREVENTING LICE

There is no evidence that it works and it can irritate your scalp. Nor is there evidence that alcohol, electric combs, products sold to prevent head lice infection (repellents) or folk remedies are effective.

19. DO NURSES CHECK CHILDREN' HEADS?

No. It is recommended that parents check their children's heads regularly (once a week or more frequently if indicated) as described in this leaflet, by wet-combing.

However, public health nurses who go into schools and practice nurses in your GP surgery are available to give help and advice about head lice to parents.

20. WHAT ABOUT THE SCHOOL OR CHILDCARE FACILITY-CAN THEY DO ANYTHING?

It is much better for all parents to check their children's hair regularly by detection wet-combing. However if there is persistent outbreaks. an alert letter should be send to the parents to remind them of the plan and further action that maybe required.

21. SHOULD I KEEP MY CHILD OFF SCHOOL?

NO! Lice are unpleasant and some people sometimes feel embarrassed if they get them, but they are not a health hazard. There is no reason for your child to miss out on their childcare or their education just because of head lice.



KEEP ALERT AND SPREAD THE WORD TO STOP THE SPREAD OF LICE.



Community Healthcare West
serving Galway, Mayo and Roscommon

Community Healthcare West Public Health Nursing

Service Date: 11/2019 Due Review: 11/2022

Acknowledgement: Leaflet from Dept of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, Northern Ireland, UK. used with permission -some amendments

For more information contact School Health Service

DON'T BUG ME! TRUTH AND LICE

PARENTS...

ONCE A WEEK, LET DETECTION COMB HERO CHECK THROUGH YOUR CHILD'S HAIR. THEN USE THE SPECIAL LOTION IF LICE ARE THERE



QUICK TIPS FOR WET COMBING CHILD'S HAIR

- Buy a detection comb from the pharmacy it should be plastic with rigid, flat teeth, set not more than 0.3mm apart.
- Hair should be wet and apply lots of conditioner.
- Comb from roots right to ends of hair.
- Work through hair, section by section.
- Checking and cleaning comb each time.
- Have plenty light.
- If moving lice are found, check all the family.
- Do this at least once a week.

QUICK TIPS FOR USING LOTION

- Treat everyone in family who have living, moving lice, at same time
- Pharmacist will advise on which lotion (See answer to Question 11, inside)
- Work through the hair, section by section check and cleaning the comb each time (refer to section 8 for more detail on wet-combing).

1. WHAT ARE HEAD LICE?

They are grey/brown insects, that live close to the scalp on humans. The insects lay eggs. Each egg is glued to a hair, often near the root. Lice and unhatched eggs are hard to spot.

2. WHAT ARE NITS?

Nits are the empty egg cases left behind when the lice hatch out. They are usually pearly white. Both eggs and nits are very difficult to remove from the hair.

3. HOW DO LICE SPREAD?

When two heads are touching for a minute or more, the lice climb rapidly through the hair from one head to another. They don't jump, fly or swim. Lice that fall from the head or amble onto bedding or hats are usually dying and harmless. Lice caught on combs can re-establish if they are combed back into the hair within 48hrs.

4. BUT I'VE SEEN THEM JUMP ON THE COMB

This is due to static electricity, making them appear to fly off the comb.

5. WHO CAN GET THEM?

Anyone with hair. They aren't fussy about clean or dirty hair. Children tend to get them more than adults, probably because they put their heads together more than adults do.

6. WHERE DO YOU GET THEM?

Anywhere. Children get them wherever they mix with other children, this can be in the home, at school or childcare facility or other activity venue.

7. HOW DO I KNOW IF MY CHILD HAS HEAD LICE?

The main symptom is itching, but you can have head lice for up to six weeks before you notice any itching. Only about one third of children have an itch. Best practice is detection wet comb at least once a week or when indicated.

Detection combs should be plastic, rigid with flat teeth, set no more than 0.3mm apart.

8. HOW DO I WET-COMB MY CHILD'S HAIR

Wash the hair with your ordinary shampoo. Put on lots of any conditioner and comb it through with an ordinary comb. This makes any lice really wet, which keeps them still. Then, using the detection comb, slot the teeth of the comb into the hair at the roots and draw the comb down to the ends. Check the comb for head lice every time you do this, clean comb with disposable white kitchen paper, dispose of the paper carefully. You may need to use a cocktail stick or nail brush to remove lice that may get caught between the comb teeth. Make sure there is good light, daylight is best. Continue until you have worked through each section of hair and have checked the whole head. Rinse off the conditioner and repeat the combing while the hair is still wet.

9. HOW OFTEN SHOULD I DO THIS?

It is good to get into a routine and carry it out at least once a week or sooner if indicated. This means you will be able to treat early if you find living, moving lice. Treating early helps cut down on the number of people in the family or who are close to the child, getting head lice.

10. WHAT DO I DO IF I FIND LICE?

If you find lice, you should check everyone else in the family and treat only those who have them. Also let people who have been in close contact with anyone with lice know, so they can check as well.

It is important that you are aware that no product will guarantee an egg kill.

Therefore in conjunction with using the treatment as per manufacturer instructions, it is essential that a strict wet-comb practice is carried out as follows; wet comb on the day of the initial treatment, day 5, day 9 and day 13. The aim of this is to eradicate any lice that may have hatched/reproduced since the start of the treatment.

11. WHAT DO I USE TO TREAT THE LICE?

The best way to treat is with a lotion (not a shampoo or mousse). These can be bought over the counter in a pharmacy. In the past, chemical insecticides were used to treat head lice. Oil based products are now recommended in these products have a physical effect, so the lice do not get 'resistant' to them.

Your pharmacist is the best person to advise you on which one to get. If you are buying products outside of the Republic of Ireland, you need to discuss this with the pharmacist before you buy.

12. HOW DO I USE THE LOTION?

There will be instructions in the box on how to put on the treatment, and how long to leave it on for. Each of the products are slightly different. Put the lotion on dry hair. Part the hair near the top of the head, put lotion onto the scalp and rub it in. Part the hair a bit further down and do the same thing again. Do this over and over again until all sections of hair have been done and the whole scalp is wet. You don't need to put lotion any further down than where you would put a ponytail band. Treat everyone with lice at the same time so that untreated people don't infect the treated ones again.

Use product as per product information leaflet and follow the strict wet combing regime as follow also; Day 1, Day 5, Day 9 and Day 13 this is to remove any hatched lice. No product guarantees to kill eggs and these can hatch into lice in one week.

Once treatment is completed, continue with weekly detection wet-combing.

13. WHAT IF I FIND NITS AFTER TREATMENT?

If you find nits but don't find lice, don't treat. Nits are the empty egg cases which are glued to the hair. They will be left behind on the hairs after you have treated but this doesn't mean the treatment has failed.

14. WHAT IF I KEEP FINDING LICE

There could be 2 reasons for this. It could be because your child has been re-infected with lice, or the treatment wasn't carried out correctly. Check the whole family again and treat all those with lice again. Remember to spread the word to family and friends. If you still find lice after that, ask your GP or pharmacist for advice.

15. WHAT IF I STILL HAVE NITS

Nits (empty egg cases), on their own, do not need to be treated. You can remove them by hand or fine tooth combing if you don't like the look of them. They can be hard to remove because they are glued to the hair.