



**Once a week, take a peek!**

Within most schools at any one time, there will be a small number of children infected with head lice. Infection levels remain fairly constant, so we need your help to combat the bugs!

## **How Do I Look for Head Lice?**

To diagnose a case of head lice you need to find them alive. This is when you need to use a treatment. They move fast and are small – so they can be hard to find!

Head lice range in sizes from a full stop to a sesame seed.

### **Where to Peek:**

- Close to the scalp
- Behind the ears
- The back of the neck
- The top of the head
- Under the fringe



### **What to Peek for:**

- Adult lice are 2-4 mm long. Immature lice are even smaller
- Live lice remain close to the scalp
- Nits are dead or empty eggshells. Simply remove these by comb/hand by nipping your fingers/using the ends of your nails to pull down and out to the bottom of the hair and out

Checking for lice might not be your idea of fun and shouldn't be a stressful experience for you or your child. It is just a normal part of every family's personal hygiene routine, like brushing your teeth or washing your hair, so a good time to do it would be watching the TV or at bath-time. You could make this experience even more stress-free by popping their favourite TV programme or film on, or listen to music, sit your child on a towel and take a peek or do when they are in the bath happily playing with bubbles.

Good lighting is important and so is comfort! Comb for lice, parting hair in small sections and returning from time to time to areas you've already covered just to make sure.

## **How Do I Get Rid of Head Lice?**

### **Wet combing method.**

The wet combing ('bug-busting') method is physically removing lice using a nit comb, without using chemical treatments. This method can be helpful because head lice are growing increasingly resistant to the insecticides used to remove them.





However, success depends on adopting a painstaking approach of regular and thorough combing, ideally on a weekly basis on both short and long hair.

The best procedure is as follows:

- Wash the hair as normal using an ordinary shampoo.
- Apply conditioner liberally to wet hair (this causes the lice to lose their grip on the hair).
- Comb the hair through with a normal comb first, until the comb runs freely.
- Section the hair, then with a *fine-toothed nit comb*, comb from the roots along the complete length of the hair and after each stroke, check the comb for lice and wipe it clean. Work methodically over the whole head for at least 30 minutes, this can take up to 1 hour or longer (depending on the amount hair your child has)
- Rinse the hair as normal.
- Repeat every three days for at least two weeks making sure the pesky bugs are kept at bay.

### **Medicated lotion or rinse**

Ask your pharmacist for an over-the-counter insecticide lotion. Only use a lotion if you find a living (moving) head louse.

Apply the preparation according to the instructions and remove the lice and eggs with a fine-toothed nit comb. Take care when applying treatment, because the preparations are usually toxic.

The normal advice is to treat once, and repeat seven days later:

- insecticide lotion should be left on as per instructions and repeated after seven days

Make sure you have enough lotion to treat all those affected in your family.

The lotion may be capable of killing eggs, as well as lice, but there is no certainty of this. Check for baby lice hatching out from eggs three to five days after you use it, and again at 10-12 days.

No treatment is 100% effective.

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