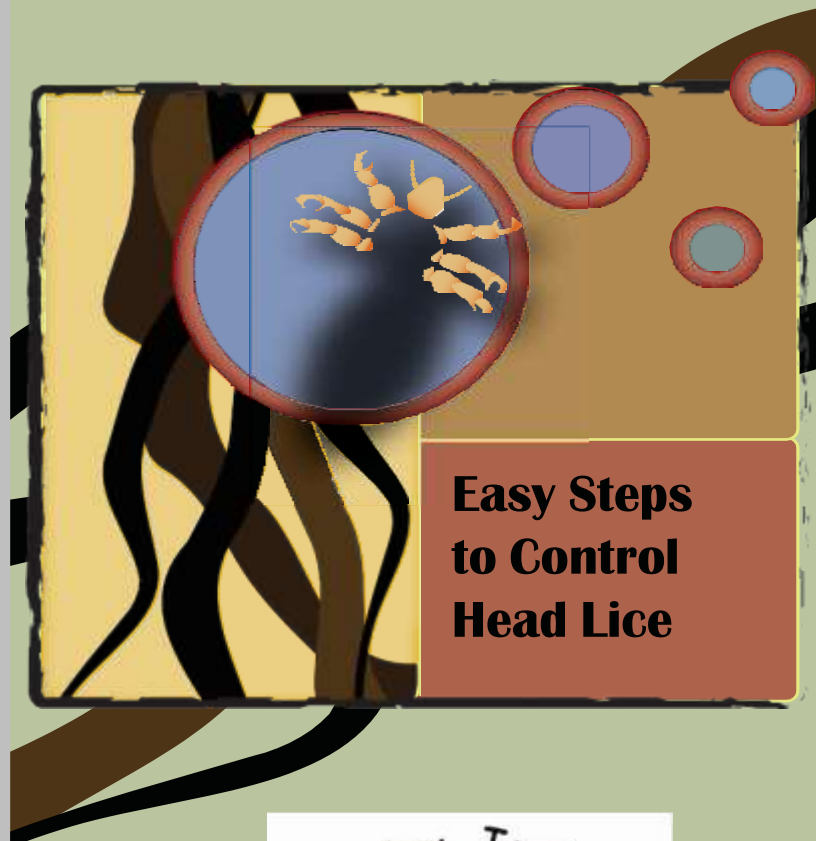


If you are unsure about anything
Telephone NHS Direct 08454647

1. We all call them 'nits', when really we mean head lice. A 'nit' is actually the empty egg case.
2. Head lice live their whole life in our hair and cannot survive anywhere else.
3. Even mature head lice are no bigger than a grain of rice, so they are hard to find.
4. Clean or dirty, long or short, straight or curly, boys' or girls' ... they do not prefer any kind of hair.
5. Head lice move from one person to another during even very brief head-to-head contact.
6. They feed by sucking blood from the scalp.
7. Newly-laid eggs (live eggs) are glued to a single hair close to the scalp.
8. If you do not remove the new, 'live' eggs, you are still infested. Killing head lice is not enough.
9. When each head louse hatches. The 'nit' remains in place as each hair strand grows out.
10. Itching is an allergic reaction to the head lice feeding on the scalp.

A PARENTS GUIDE TO HEAD LICE



What are head lice?

Head lice are small insects that live in people's hair and feed by sucking blood from a person's scalp.

Head lice glue their eggs, or 'nits' to hair so that the 'nits' do not get brushed off.

Head lice die quickly without food so they cannot survive very long away from your child's head.

Nits (eggs) take 6 to 9 days to hatch into lice. These young lice start laying eggs in only 7 days.

How do people get head lice?

Head lice move quickly from one person to another when their hair or heads touch.

They 'glue' their eggs onto hair and then move on. The eggs or 'nits' are beige in colour and no bigger than a grain of sand.



How can I check my child's hair for 'lice and nits' and what do I do if I find any?

Wash your child's hair as usual. **1.**

Apply lots and lots of conditioner (a cheap variety will do) and comb the hair through to straighten and untangle it. Then section the hair to the root. **2.**

Next use a torch or bright light to shine onto the child's head, put a towel around their shoulders and comb through with a **fine-tooth** comb. Check the comb after every stroke as you work through the hair, section by section, so that the whole head of hair is combed through. **3.**

Any nits (eggs) **must** be removed. If they cannot be combed out then pick them out with a fingernail or cut the single hair between the scalp and where any nits are attached. **4.**

It is important to check **all your family's hair** and get treatment if any lice are found. Common places to find lice are close to the scalp, the neckline and behind the ears. **5.**

If you find any lice try to capture one on a piece of sellotape and take it to a chemist. The chemist will give you a lotion to treat everyone who has head lice. Follow the instructions on the packet. **6.**

!!REMEMBER!!
It is important to recognise that a **re-infestation** can occur at any time, if head to head contact is made with someone who has head lice. Therefore you must check your child's hair at **every** hair washing session.

Prevention and Treatment

Checking for head lice should be just a normal part of a family's personal hygiene routine like brushing teeth or washing hair.

It is best to check for head lice using a fine-tooth comb, ideally white so any lice can be easily seen. Combing through the hair after applying a conditioner makes the process much easier and is more comfortable for the child.

Regular checking and 'wet combing' is really the only reliable way to find and remove an infestation.

Do not feel ashamed or worried, angry or upset - if you are still unsure what to do please ask at school.