

## head lice

INFORMATION FOR ALL THE FAMILY

### INFORMATION

Detection is the most effective method of control. Eliminate headlice before they take hold. They can cause embarrassment or uncomfortable itching.

- **Lice will not live on brushes, combs or caps.**
- **Head lice love clean hair: they can affect anyone of any age.**
- **Head lice are almost invisible to the naked eye, even when fully mature. Lice only reach a maximum of 3mm.**
- **Regular combing helps prevent infestation or reinfestation.**



### HEAD LOUSE

#### Treatment in the form of

- Lotion, available from your local chemist.
- Ensure the treatment used is effective on both head lice and eggs.
- This may need 2 applications at 7 day intervals - always follow instructions on the label.
- Waterbased lotion is particularly suitable for children with eczema or asthma and also for sensitive skin.
- If you discover head lice in your child's hair please contact the parents of their friends. It is important to check all family members and contacts - not just the infested person.
- Wash and renew fine tooth comb and brushes frequently.
- Do not apply lotion unless you find a moving, living louse on the child's head.



Using the comb





## PREVENTION

Responsibility for prevention of head lice lies with the parents. The logic behind this is borne out by the fact that 90% of head lice are discovered by parents and they are undoubtedly the most effective detectors. Insecticides should be used only for treatment and not prevention.

Clean hair does not prevent head lice infestation. Lice prefer clean hair to greasy hair as it is easier to reach the scalp from which they feed. The best and only preventive measure is good daily hair brushing and checking with a fine tooth comb.

Brushing will damage the louse and it will die. Use of a bristle brush is more effective. Always dampen hair before fine combing, it is easier to work on hair that is damp.



Examining hair for head lice



## METHODS OF DETECTION

**Check your children's hair daily.**

1. Itching is not the most common sign.
2. Comb hair over pale cloth or paper and check for lice having fallen out.
3. Lice shed their skins at night, so examination of pillowcases for black dust-like deposits is helpful.
4. When washing hair watch out for dead lice in the water.



Applying the lotion



## HEAD LOUSE

**What is it?**

A head louse is a small insect no more than 3mm in length when fully grown, with short legs and is grey/brown in colour. Lice cannot fly or hop.

It has a life cycle of 35-40 days and when mature can procreate after 10 days.

A female louse lays 6-8 eggs daily and has an incubation period of 7-8 days.

The egg is firmly attached to a single hair close to the scalp to aid incubation and after hatching the empty white eggshells remain glued to the hair. These are commonly known as nits.

The louse feeds solely on blood obtained from the scalp and may feed 4-5 times a day.

Hair growth is 1/2 " - 1" per month, therefore a nit positioned 1" from the scalp indicates infestation took place some weeks ago.



Magnified Head Louse