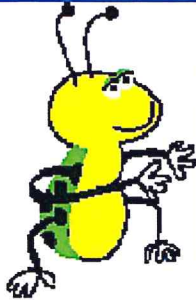


HEAD LICE



The Facts About Head Lice

- Head lice are small insects (about the size of a sesame seed when fully grown) that live very close to the scalp.
- Nits are not the same as lice. Nits are the empty egg cases which stick to the hair.
- You only have head lice if you find a living, moving louse (not a nit).
- Anybody can get head lice – adults and children.
- Head lice don't care if the hair is dirty or clean, short or long.
- A lot of infections are caught from close family and friends in the home and community, not at school.
- Head lice can walk from one head to another, if the heads are pressed together for some time. They do not fly, jump or swim.
- Regular hair care may help to spot lice early.
- The best way to stop infection is for families to check their heads regularly using detection combing.

REMEMBER

It doesn't matter how many nits you have, or how itchy your scalp is – if you can't find a living, moving louse, you don't have lice.



Frequently Asked Questions

Who catches head lice?

Anyone can catch head lice, but preschool children, primary school children and their families are most at risk.

How do you catch head lice?

Head lice are transmitted through direct, prolonged head-to-head contact with an infected person. This is especially common during play or sport at school and with close contact at home.

How serious are head lice?

Head lice are not a serious health problem. They rarely cause anything more than an itchy scalp.

Can you prevent head lice?

The best way to stop infection is for people to learn how to check their heads for lice. The most effective way to do this is through regular detection combing.

How do you treat head lice?

A diagnosis of head lice can only be made if a living, moving louse is found. Contact your GP or Pharmacist for advice on which treatment to use.

Should a child with head lice be kept off school?

No. There is no need for a child who has lice to stay away from school. One reason for this is that exclusion will not ensure the elimination of the infection and if a child does have lice, he or she are likely to have had them at school for several weeks before diagnosis.

SOURCE: The Health Protection Agency