

## Wyton on the Hill's Head Lice Advice for Parents and Carers

Unfortunately, head lice are a common part of primary school life and schools are no longer permitted to check children's hair for lice in the way that they did when many of us were at school. As children spend so much time playing and learning together, it is very easy for them to spread.

Anyone can get head lice and, contrary to popular belief, having head lice has nothing to do with your personal hygiene.

What are head lice?

Head lice are live insects. Their empty eggs are called nits. Lice are wingless insects that hold on to the hair, feeding from the blood in the scalp. They spread through head-to-head contact, they do not jump. Adult females live for up to a month and lay around five eggs a day.

Symptoms

Itching, although it is possible to have head lice without symptoms, so it is best to take a look.

How to check

Head lice are tiny and fast! Look behind ears, close to the scalp, at the back of the neck and under fringes for evidence of lice, eggs or nits. Adult head lice are 2 - 4 mm long, immature lice are even smaller.

How to get rid of head lice

Method 1: Wet combing:

1. Wash hair using ordinary shampoo.
2. Apply a conditioner to make combing easier (this also makes it harder for the louse to cling on).
3. Lightly towel dry the hair.
4. Using **a comb designed for this purpose**, part hair into small sections and comb hair from the scalp to the end.
5. Wipe the comb each time and check for live lice.
6. Repeat until you are sure the whole head is combed.
7. Thoroughly rinse the hair and comb.
8. Comb every **three days for at least two weeks** until no more lice are found.

Method Two: Medicated treatments:

These are available from pharmacies – please follow the treatment's instruction leaflet carefully. These can be very expensive and are not always as effective as regular wet combing.

Prevention

- Check your child's hair weekly – don't wait for there to be symptoms. This is by far the best way to prevent head lice. Make it a weekly habit!
- **Please** ensure that if your child has long hair it is tied back / up.
- There are a number of head lice prevention products available i.e. special shampoos, tea tree sprays etc.

Remember:

- If you find head lice, check and treat the whole family at the same time.
- Inform the school, baby-sitters, friends etc.
- Lice only live on human heads they will not live on bedding or clothes.
- They cannot jump or fly.
- They are only caught by head to head contact.
- Head lice are not fussy about the length of hair or how clean it is.

Useful websites for further information:

[www.nhs.uk/video/Pages/how-do-i-check-for-headlice-and-treat-headlice.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/video/Pages/how-do-i-check-for-headlice-and-treat-headlice.aspx)

[www.onceaweektakeapeek.com](http://www.onceaweektakeapeek.com)

If you require further support or information, please contact our Pastoral Learning Mentor, Mrs Best, or email our office at [office@wyton.cambs.sch.uk](mailto:office@wyton.cambs.sch.uk).