

Head Lice

**Community Health Services
Children and Families**

Patient Information Leaflet



Facts of Lice

- Head Lice are very small insects, about the size of a pinhead when fully grown. They live very close to the scalp.
- Anyone can get head lice; both adults and children.
- Head lice climb rapidly from head to head.
- Hair can be clean, dirty, short or long – it does not matter to the lice.
- Nits are the empty white egg cases which stick to the hair. These are not lice.
- The grey egg cases contain lice.
- The majority of head lice are transferred from friends and family and not always at school.
- Regular hair care and detection combing once a week is the best way to stop head lice becoming a problem.

Points to remember

- If you only find nits (empty eggs) and no live moving lice, then you do not have head lice.
- The best way to stop head lice is to do detection combing regularly with a detection comb.
- Never use insecticides just as prevention, or 'just in case'.
- Do not use head lice shampoo or foams / mousses – the overnight lotions are more effective.
- Treatments are available from a pharmacist and instructions on their use should be followed according to product.
- Two treatments, 7 days apart is necessary to kill lice effectively.
- Treat all people who have head lice at the same time.

Useful contacts for advice

- Health Visitor
- General Practitioner
- Practice Nurse
- Pharmacist
- School Nurse



The picture above shows 2 lice next to match to show comparison of size

How to detect and treat Head Lice (wet combing)

- Purchase a fine tooth detector comb, which are available from pharmacies and supermarkets.
1. Wash the hair well and leave wet. Put a handful of any type of hair conditioner onto the hair and rub in.
 2. Ensure you have good lighting – daylight is best.
 3. Comb the hair through with an ordinary comb first, then using the detector comb, begin at the top of the head, making sure that the comb touches the scalp, and slowly draw the comb to the ends of the hair.
 4. Wipe the teeth of the comb with kitchen roll after every stroke to check for lice.
- Repeat points 1-4 working your way around the head. This should take about 15 minutes.
 - Rinse the hair thoroughly after combing has finished.
 - Repeat the above procedure every 3 days until the head is clear of lice and eggs, and then weekly as part of bath time routine.

Treatment of Head Lice

- Do not start treatment unless a living, moving louse is found.
- If infestation is severe or not responding to wet combing, advice can be obtained from your School Nurse, Health Visitor, Doctor or Pharmacist.
- Always follow the instructions on how to apply the lotion. The whole scalp should be wet.
- Let the lotion dry naturally. Keep away from naked flames and cigarettes.
- Lotions and liquids must be left on the hair for 12 hours or overnight before washing off.
- Continue to use the wet combing method (please see the previous heading for the procedure) thoroughly each day, then repeat the entire process 7 days later, using a second bottle of the same product.

Useful contact details

Department:

Telephone: 01253 951700

Hospital Switchboard: 01253 300000

Patient Relations Department

The Patient Relations Department offers impartial advice and deals with any concerns or complaints the Trust receives. You can contact them via tel: **01253 955588** or by email: **bfwh.patientrelations@nhs.net**

You can also write to us at: **Patient Relations Department, Blackpool Victoria Hospital, Whinney Heys Road, Blackpool FY3 8NR**

Further information is available on our website: **www.bfwh.nhs.uk**

References

Details of the references used in writing this leaflet are available on request from: **Procedural Document and Leaflet Coordinator 01253 953397** or **bfwh.trustpolicyteam@nhs.net**

Options available

If you'd like a large print, audio, Braille or a translated version of this leaflet then please call: **01253 955520**



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