

# HEAD LICE AND NITS ADVICE FROM THE NHS



ONCE A WEEK,  
TAKE A PEEK!

Head lice and nits are very common in young children. They don't have anything to do with dirty hair and are usually picked up from head-to-head contact.

## Check if it is head lice

Head lice are small insects, up to 3mm long. They can be difficult to spot. Head lice eggs (nits) are yellow, brown or white (empty shells) and attached to the hair.

## How does it feel?

- Itchy!
- like something is moving in your hair

The only way to be sure someone has head lice is by finding live lice or eggs.



You can do this by combing the hair with a special fine-toothed comb (detection comb). You can buy these online or at pharmacies.

## How to get rid of head lice

You can treat head lice without seeing a GP. Treat head lice as soon as you spot them. You should check everyone in the house and treat them on the same day if they have head lice.

## Use a fine toothed-comb

If you don't want to use chemicals, you can buy a special fine-toothed comb online or from pharmacies to remove head lice and nits. There will be instructions on the pack but you should - use the comb on wet or dry hair - although it usually works better on wet hair with conditioner. Comb the whole head of hair from the roots to the ends.

## **Repeat every few days for 2 weeks**

## Use lotion or spray

You can use medicated lotions and sprays to kill head lice in all types of hair. You can buy these from pharmacies, supermarkets or online. Head lice should die within a day. Some treatments need to be repeated after a week to kill any newly hatched lice.



There is **NO** need to keep your child off school if they have head lice.

There is nothing you can do to prevent head lice. You can prevent head lice from spreading by avoiding head-to-head contact.

Don't use medicated lotions or spray to prevent head lice as this can irritate the scalp and skin.