

Head Lice and Nits Policy

Headlice and nits are very common in young children and their families. They do not have anything to do with dirty hair and are picked up by head-to-head contact.

Headlice are small insects and can grow up to 3mm in length. They can be quite difficult to spot in hair depending on colour. Nits are headlice eggs and can be brown or white in colour.

Headlice can make your head feel:

- . Itchy
- . Like something is moving in your hair

The only way to be sure somebody has headlice is by finding a live louse. You can do this by combing your hair with a fine-toothed comb or a detection comb. You can buy these online or at your local pharmacy.

How to get rid of headlice

You can treat headlice without seeing your GP.

- Treat headlice as soon as you spot them.
- You should check everyone in the house and start treating anyone who has had headlice on the same day.
- Please do not return to nursery until the headlice have been treated.

Wet Combing

Lice and nits can be removed by wet combing. You should try this method first.

You can buy a special fine-toothed comb (detection comb) online or from pharmacies to remove headlice and nits.

There may be instructions on the pack, but usually you:

- Wash your hair with ordinary shampoo. A medicated or tea tree shampoo may be more effective
- Apply lots of conditioner (any conditioner will do).
- Comb the whole head of hair, from roots to the ends.

It usually takes about 10 minutes to comb short hair, and 20-30 minutes for long, frizzy, or curly hair. Do wet combing on days 1,5,9, and 13, to catch any newly hatched head lice. Check again that everyone's hair is free of lice on day 17.

Medications, Lotions, and Sprays

Ask a pharmacist for advice if you have tried wet combing for 17 days, but your child still has live head lice. They may recommend using medicated lotions and sprays. These kill headlice in all types of hair, and you can buy them from pharmacies, supermarkets or online. Headlice should die within a day. Some lotions and sprays come with a comb to remove dead headlice and eggs. Some treatments need to be repeated after a week to kill any newly hatched lice. Check the pack to see if they're okay for you or your child and how to use them. If lotions and sprays do not work, speak to a pharmacist about other treatments.

If we suspect a child has headlice, we will contact parents/carers straight away to collect their child, treat the lice accordingly and bring their child back the following day/next time they're in.

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