

How head lice are spread

Head lice are spread by direct head to head contact. They climb from one person's hair to another's.

Head lice:

- can't fly, jump or swim
- are very unlikely to be spread by objects like hats, combs and pillows
- don't have a preference for dirty, clean, short or long hair
- only affect people
- can't be caught from animals

Once detached from the hair, head lice will usually die within 12 to 24 hours.



Nearest pharmacy

Well Pharmacy
Queenborough
01795 662410

Delmergate LTD
57 St George's
01795 665246

Tesco
Bridge Road
01233 363220



Head lice



Head lice Care

Information



More information

Head lice can make your head feel:

- itchy
- like something is moving in your hair

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

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

Medicated lotions and sprays

If wet combing has not worked or is not suitable, you could try a medicated lotion or spray. These kill head lice in all types of hair, and you can buy them from pharmacies, supermarkets or online.

Head lice should die within a day. Some lotions and sprays come with a comb to remove dead lice 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 OK for you or your child and how to use them.

If lotions or sprays do not work, speak to a pharmacist about other treatments.

Some treatments are not recommended because they're unlikely to work.

For example:

- products containing permethrin
- head lice "repellents"
- electric combs for head lice
- tree and plant oil treatments, such as tea tree oil, eucalyptus oil and lavender oil herbal remedies



You cannot prevent head lice
There's nothing you can do to prevent head lice.

You can help stop them spreading by wet or dry combing regularly to catch them early.
Do not use medicated lotions and sprays to prevent head lice. They can irritate the scalp.

There's no need for children to stay off school or to wash laundry on a hot wash.

How to get rid of head lice

Treat head lice as soon as you spot them. You can treat head lice without seeing a GP.

You should check everyone in the house and start treating anyone who has head lice on the same day.

There's no need to keep your child off school if they have head lice.

Wet combing

Lice and nits can be removed by wet combing.

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

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

- wash hair with ordinary shampoo
- apply lots of conditioner (any conditioner will do)
- comb the whole head of hair, from the roots to the ends

It usually takes about 10 minutes to comb short hair, and 20 to 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.

