



Head Lice and Nits



HEAD LICE LIKES ANYBODY WITH HAIR

- Lice do not jump, hop or fly. People become infected by direct contact from one persons head to another.
- Lice may move onto hats, combs, helmets, hair ties and other surfaces, but must return to a human head to survive within 24 hours.
- Head lice do not live in carpets, sandpits or on animals.
- Not everybody will itch so you must look for lice and eggs (nits).
- Adult head lice are the size of tiny ants and range in colour from skin-tone to dark brown. Head lice have claws on the end of each of their six legs. These claws grasp the hair with such strength that it makes the head lice difficult to dislodge.
- Nits are the eggs laid by female lice and are the size and colour of a grain of sugar. Heat generated by the body hatches eggs.
- Eggs are laid very close to the scalp and stick like glue to the hair. They hatch within 7 days. The earlier the lice are identified and treated the less time there is for eggs to hatch.



TREATMENT AND PREVENTION

- Removal of eggs must be done following application of head lice treatment. Eggs can be removed by combing with a special head lice comb or with the fingernails. If eggs are not removed the problem may recur.
- Conditioner applied to dry hair weakens the grip of the lice and makes it difficult to hang onto the hair. Comb the hair with a special head lice comb and look for the lice by wiping the comb onto a tissue. The eggs are not so easily identified this way.
- The conditioner needs to be washed out thoroughly before putting on head lice treatment or the treatment may not work effectively.
- Lice live on strands of hair but move to the scalp to feed. It is important that all of the hair is completely covered with the head lice treatment and is used according to instructions.
- No head lice treatment will kill 100% of the eggs. You must use the treatment 7 days after the first treatment to kill any lice that may have hatched.
- Wash combs, brushes, towels, hats and bed linen in detergent and hot water.
- There are 4 different types of head lice treatments available. All have different main ingredients, eg pyrethrins, synthetic pyrethrins, malathion and herbal agents. If a head lice problem continues try a treatment with a different main ingredient.
- Lice can be weakened by thoroughly brushing hair morning and night. When injured or weakened, lice have difficulty gripping the hair.
- Tea tree oil applied to the hair can be used as a preventative measure against infestation.
- Get into the habit of checking the hair every time it is washed. Daily checking is necessary if there is an outbreak as everybody may not itch.
- Avoid direct head to head contact with others.
- Do not share hats, combs, hair-ties etc.
- Keep long hair tied back or plaited.
- Never use treatments as a preventative.



HEAD LICE PRODUCTS AVAILABLE

Active insecticide group	Commercial Product
1. PYRETHRINS	Amcal Head Lice Foam Banlice Mouse Delva Formula PCT Lyban Foam Meditox Foam Pyrenel Pyrifoam Lotion
2. SYNTHETIC PYRETHROIDS (bioallethrin, permethrin)	Orange Medic Orange Medic Plus Paralice Pyrifoam Head Lice Treatment Quellada Creme Rinse Quellada Head Lice Treatment
3. ORGANOPHOSPHATES (maldison or malathion)	Cleensheen Exolice Medicated Foam HL7 HLT Lice Rid KP24 Lotion KP24 Foam LX Medicated Foam
4A. COMBINATIONS of herbal/essential oils	Herbs for Headlice Lice Attack NeutraLice Quit Nits All Natural Head Lice Treatment Sunspirit Aromatherapy Lice Scents to Kill!!! Wild Child All Natural Head Lice Treatment Electric Blue Tea Tree Lice Foam
4B. COMBINATIONS of herbal/essential oils with natural pyrethrins	Lice Blaster

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**For further information contact the Environmental Health team at the
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