

# Head Lice

- FACTS

Head lice are small, six legged wingless insects, pin sized when they hatch.

They cannot fly, jump or swim. Instead they spread by clambering from one head to another, anyone with hair can catch them. The female louse lays eggs in sacs (nits) which are very small, dull in colour and well camouflaged. These will hatch in 7-10 days. Lice then take a further 6-14 days to become fully grown. Head lice are not fussy about hair length or condition.

- DETECTION

Head lice are well camouflaged and may not be detected by a quick inspection. After washing and conditioning your child's hair, use a fine comb to untangle the hair.

Then, using a head lice comb (available from your local pharmacy or supermarket) comb the hair in sections, comb the hair from the roots to the ends, checking the comb after each stroke, work through every section of the hair.

This procedure should be done on a regular basis to prevent the cycle of head lice, all family members should be checked.

- TREATMENTS

If you find head lice then you have two options;

## Option 1

This involves killing the lice with lotions and creams available from any pharmacy or supermarket (your GP can prescribe treatment if a live louse is found). Treating lice with a treatment product will only treat the current lice and must be repeated after seven days, also be aware that treatment will not prevent further infestations.

## Option 2

Systematic combing. This involves physically removing the lice using conditioners and combing as described in the detection section above. This is required on a daily basis until no more lice are found.

**Please check your child's hair regularly to prevent head lice from spreading further.**