

Treat and Defeat Head Lice

Head Lice are very common. More than a third of children in the UK are likely to get head lice at some time during the year. Those aged 4 to 11 are most susceptible because their heads come into close contact while they play. But that doesn't mean only children catch them – adults can become infected in the same way.

What are Head Lice?

They are wingless insects around 2mm long with three pairs of legs and hook-like claws, which they use to grip the hair shaft. Lice are a greyish-brown colour, live only on humans and survive by sucking blood from the scalp. They can't swim, fly or jump. They spread by walking from head to another but the two heads have to be in close contact. As they are slow walkers it takes about 30 seconds to cross to another head. Head lice don't mind if the hair is dirty or clean.



There are few symptoms, so if someone in the family has head lice, it can take months to spot. You might notice itching, red bite marks on the scalp, nits around the hairline or a louse crawling about. Treatment should only take place once a live louse has been seen on either the scalp or comb. Seeing nits or a dead louse lying on a pillow isn't enough. There are several reasons for this.

How to keep lice at bay

Keeping lice at bay is an ongoing process. Make a point of checking your child's hair and scalp once or twice a month using a head lice comb, and comb their hair every day using a fine-toothed comb rather than a brush. It is worth keeping long hair tied up, especially when children are in contact with each other.

STEP 1

DETECT WITH A
FINE TOOTHED
COMB.

STEP 2

TREAT WITH OVER THE COUNTER
TREATMENTS RECOMMENDED BY
YOUR PHARMASIST.

STEP 3

MAKE SURE BY
TREATING AGAIN
ONE WEEK LATER.