

## How to spot head lice

Head lice can be difficult to see, even when the head is closely inspected.

Unhatched eggs or nits (empty eggshells) alone aren't enough to diagnose an active head lice infestation. This is because it can be difficult to distinguish between eggs and nits that are dead or alive. Nits also usually remain glued to hairs long after successful treatment.

To confirm an active head lice infestation, a louse must be found through a reliable, accurate method, such as detection combing.

Detection combing is the best way of finding head lice. It involves using a special fine-toothed head lice comb with a tooth spacing of 0.2-0.3mm to comb through the hair.

The comb can trap even the smallest lice. It works better on wet hair but can also be used on dry hair.

## Treating head lice

Head lice can usually be effectively treated with lotions or sprays designed to kill head lice, or by wet combing, using a specially designed head lice comb.

## Wet combing

The wet combing method involves removing the head lice by systematically combing the hair using a special fine-toothed comb.

The comb's teeth should be spaced 0.2-0.3mm apart. Lice can be crushed or trapped between the teeth of nit combs with a tooth spacing of less than 0.19mm and remain unseen.

You can buy a fine-toothed comb from your local pharmacy or you can order one online.



## The wet combing method

1. Wash the hair using ordinary shampoo and apply plenty of conditioner, before using a wide-toothed comb to straighten and untangle the hair.
2. Once the comb moves freely through the hair without dragging, switch to the louse detection comb. Make sure the teeth of the comb slot into the hair at the roots, with the bevel-edge of the teeth lightly touching the scalp.
3. Draw the comb down to the ends of the hair with every stroke, and check the comb for lice.
4. Remove lice by wiping or rinsing the comb.
5. Work methodically through the hair, section by section, so that the whole head is combed through.
6. Rinse out conditioner and repeat the combing procedure.
7. Repeat the procedure on days three, six, nine, 12 and 15, so that you clear young lice as they hatch, before they have time to reach maturity.

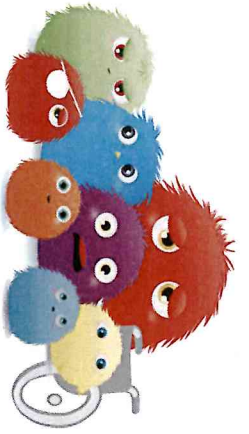
How long it will take to comb your child's hair will depend on the type of hair. For example, short, straight hair can be quickly prepared and can be fine-toothed combed in a few minutes. Longer, curlier hair will take longer to comb.

## Preventing head lice

It's difficult to prevent a head lice infestation because head lice are spread by head-to-head contact.



Regular detection combing, on a weekly basis is the best way to find new lice quickly.



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Reference: NHS Choices <http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Head-lice/Pages/Diagnosis.aspx>

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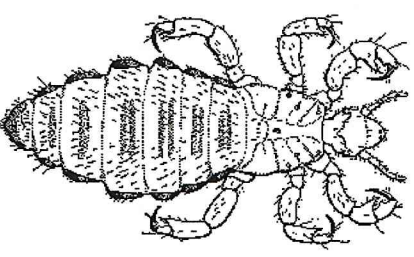


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