

Other Information

Contact Tracing

A list should be made up by each person who has headlice, of everyone they have had close, prolonged, head-to-head contact with. These people should be told that they have been in contact with a person who has had headlice and that they should check their own hair.

Swimming

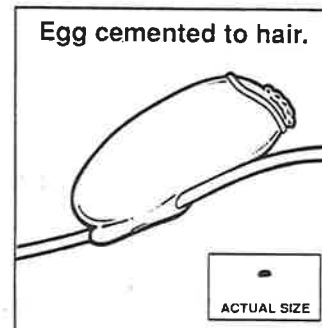
Chlorine from swimming pools does affect the effectiveness of lotions. If the person has been in a chlorinated pool in the three days before treatment, the hair should be thoroughly washed and dried before treatment commences.

Whose Responsibility is it?

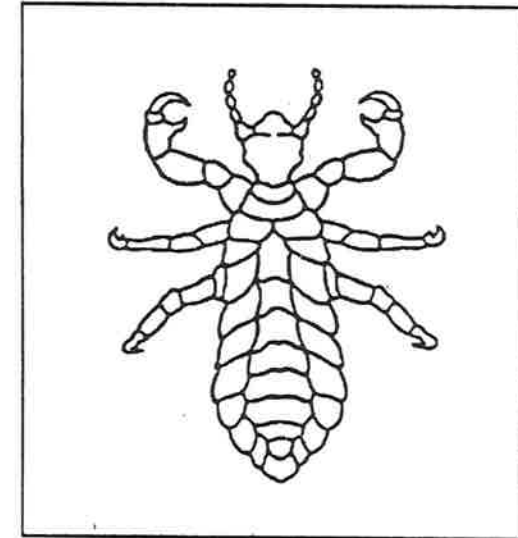
The responsibility to check children's heads regularly is that of the parent or guardian. The school nurse does not come into school to examine children for headlice because it has been proved that checking heads in school does not work unless parents treat at home.

Facts about Headlice

- ◆ Headlice are the size of a match head and may be grey or brown in colour.
- ◆ Lice feed by sucking blood from the scalp.
- ◆ Lice like to stay close to the scalp for warmth.
- ◆ Eggs, often known as nits, are glued to the base of hairs, where they hatch in 7 - 10 days.
- ◆ White empty sacs may be found further up the hair as it grows out (approximately one centimetre per month).
- ◆ Lice mature in approximately 7 - 14 days.
- ◆ Headlice are only passed on by climbing from one head to another. They are not able to fly or jump.
- ◆ Children are most commonly affected because they play in close contact with each other and heads come into contact frequently.
- ◆ Headlice have no particular preference for hair colour, length or state of cleanliness.



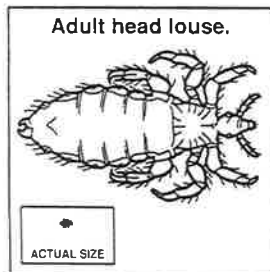
Headlice



Produced by: The Headlice Strategy Group
South Essex Health Authority

Prevention

- ◆ Prevention is far easier than cure.
- ◆ Each person should have his/her own brush and comb.
- ◆ Hair should be completely combed twice daily.
- ◆ Once a week at home, everybody's head should be checked for headlice - a detection comb, or a very fine toothed comb should be used on wet hair. The comb should be washed before using on a different child.
- ◆ Comb through the hair in sections from the roots, along the length of the hair.
- ◆ Look for the early signs of infestations - i.e., black dust on the pillow.



Treatment Option One

Wet Combing

If lice are found:

- ◆ Wash the hair in the normal way with an ordinary shampoo.
- ◆ Using lots of hair conditioner and while the hair is very wet, comb through the hair from the roots with a fine toothed comb.
- ◆ Make sure the teeth of the comb slot into the hair at the roots with every stroke. This should be done over a pale surface, such as a paper towel or the bath.
- ◆ Clear the comb of lice between each stroke.
- ◆ Wet lice find it difficult to escape, and hair which is slippery from conditioner makes it hard for them to keep a grip - so removal with the comb is easier.
- ◆ Repeat this routine every day for 2 weeks, so that any lice emerging from the eggs are removed before they can spread.

This does require commitment to persevere but some parents may find it preferable to using chemicals on their children's hair.

However, if this treatment option appears to continually fail, treatment option two may be advised

There is *no* reason to keep your child away from school once you have started treatment.

Treatment Option Two

Insecticides

- ◆ Check with your pharmacist, GP or School Nurse which preparation is currently recommended.
- ◆ Follow the manufacturers instructions carefully.
- ◆ After treatment and whilst the hair is still wet, a fine toothed comb may be used to remove dead lice.
- ◆ It could take up to 24 hours for lice to die, so do not assume the treatment has not worked.
- ◆ To ensure treatment has been successful, detection combing on wet hair should be carried out on all treated persons three times over the next seven days.
- ◆ Repeat treatment on the seventh day whether or not lice are found.
- ◆ Small lice mean that the eggs were not affected by the first treatment. A repeat treatment will kill the baby lice before they can lay more eggs.
- ◆ Large lice mean that the head has been re-infested - so contact tracing and the treatment cycle will have to be re-started.