



Head Lice

Whilst anyone of any age can get head lice, they are most common among primary school children. Throughout the course of this half term we have had to notify many of you that there has been a head lice outbreak.

You will no doubt appreciate that tackling head lice is a community responsibility involving school, parents and pupils in an integrated programme of education, awareness and prevention. The only way to be certain your child has head lice is by finding a live, moving louse on your child's head. Head lice can be difficult to treat due to a high re-infestation rate and their ability to develop resistance to traditional insecticides contained in some medications. It is thought head lice will not develop immunity to the newer silicone and oilbased preparations because they have a physical rather than a chemical action on lice.

To assist in the combat against head lice we enclose a comb for your child/ren. The wet combing method involves removing the head lice by systematically combing the hair using a special fine-toothed comb. The use of medicated products is not necessary for wet combing. This is advantageous because head lice are becoming more resistant to the insecticides commonly used to remove them. However, for wet combing to be effective, it involves regular and thorough combing which is time consuming. The wet combing method is described below.

- Wash the hair using ordinary shampoo and apply plenty of conditioner, before using a wide-toothed comb to straighten and untangle the hair.
- 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.
- Draw the comb down to the ends of the hair with every stroke and check the comb for lice.
- Remove lice by wiping or rinsing the comb.
- Work methodically through the hair, section by section, so that the whole head of hair is combed through.
- Rinse out the conditioner and repeat the combing procedure in the wet hair.
- Repeat the procedure on days five, nine and thirteen so that you clear young lice as they hatch before they have time to reach maturity.

I do hope you find this information helpful but if you would like more advice on which treatment best suits your needs, please speak to our school nurse Debra Braithwaite on 584357, a staff member at your local pharmacy or a doctor or nurse at your GP's surgery.