

Head Lice

What is it?

Head lice are tiny insects that can live on your scalp and lay eggs (called nits) that stick to your hair. They can make your scalp very itchy and they spread easily to other people through sharing hair brushes, hair ties, hats, beanies, hoodies, pillows or head-to-head contact. They can be all over the scalp but their favourite place to live is behind the ears and the back of the neck.



How can we treat it?

A **combination** of chemical removal with a medicated shampoo, lotion or mousse AND daily wet combing with conditioner works best.

Chemical removal with a medicated shampoo, lotion or mousse:

- ✓ These are available at the chemist and are used to kill the head lice.
- ✓ Follow the instructions on the packet; some need to stay in your hair overnight, others for a short period.
- ✓ Repeat the treatment in 8 days- this is important to kill any eggs that hatched after the first treatment.

Wet combing with hair conditioner:

- ✓ This is a cheap and effective way to treat head lice.
- ✓ You will need a fine-tooth nit comb, hair conditioner and paper towel.
- ✓ First brush out the hair to detangle it. Then coat dry hair with lots of conditioner. Comb down the hair from the scalp using the fine-tooth nit comb. Each time, wipe the comb onto the paper towel to collect the lice and eggs. Repeat the combing for every part of the head at least 4-5 times. Repeat this every 1-2 days for 10 days.



How can we stop it from spreading?

- ✓ Everyone who has had close contact or who lives in the same house should check for head lice and also get treated at the same time.
- ✗ Don't share combs, hair brushes, hair ties, hats, beanies, hoodies or pillows.
- ✓ Keep hair tied back when at school (leaving conditioner in can help).
- ✓ Regularly check for head lice after it has been treated.



Your skin care plan:

Want more information?

dermnetnz.org
dermcoll.edu.au/a-to-z-of-skin

This factsheet was developed as part of the Koolungar Moorditj Healthy Skin Project.