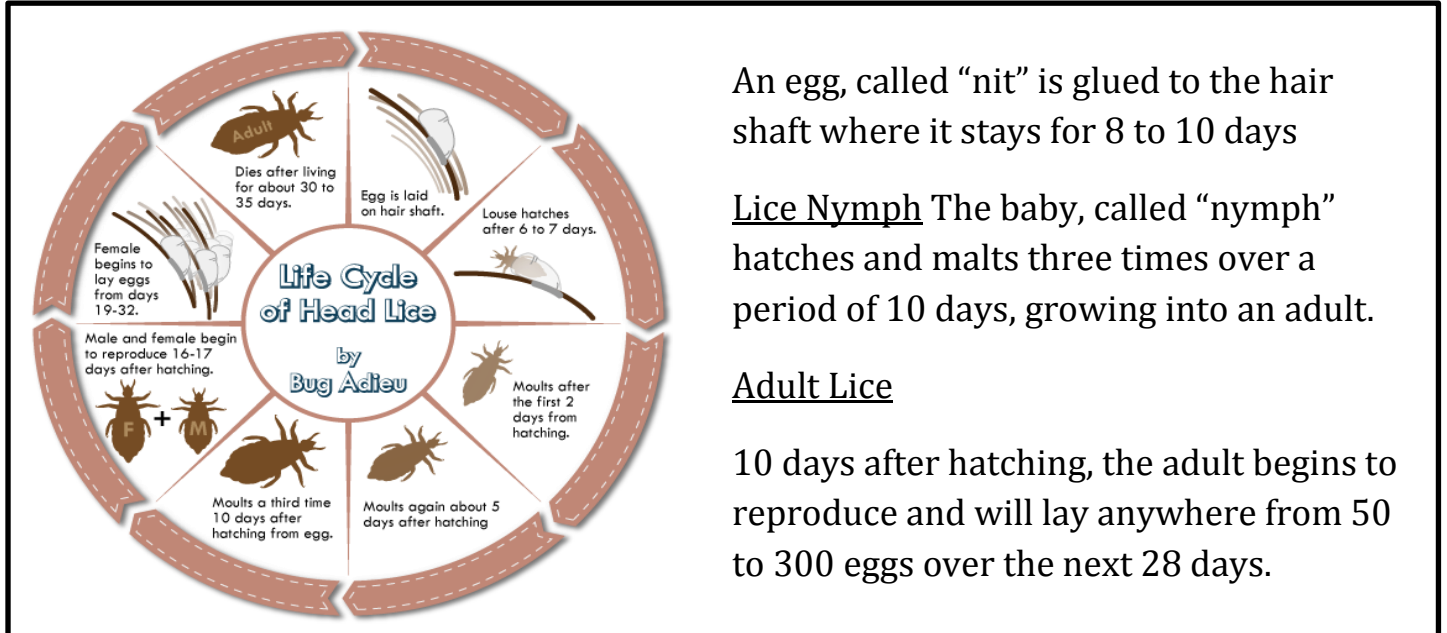


Management of Head Lice

When a child comes home saying their head is itchy, for some parents it can be difficult to separate the myths from the facts on how to manage this common childhood problem. Primary responsibility for head lice identification, treatment and prevention lies with parents. There are generally two approaches: the wet combing method and medicated treatments.



An egg, called “nit” is glued to the hair shaft where it stays for 8 to 10 days

Lice Nymph The baby, called “nymph” hatches and molts three times over a period of 10 days, growing into an adult.

Adult Lice

10 days after hatching, the adult begins to reproduce and will lay anywhere from 50 to 300 eggs over the next 28 days.

Contact is through ‘head to head’, they don’t jump or fly, hence the reason all children should have long hair tied back in school. It takes about 30 seconds for a louse to transfer from one scalp to another.

For wet combing method to be effective, it needs to be regular and thorough. These are the steps you should take:

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. Remove lice by wiping or rinsing the comb.
4. Work methodically through the hair, section by section, so that the whole head is combed through. Rinse out conditioner and repeat the combing procedure **every day** so that you clear young lice as they hatch, before they have time to reach maturity. Continue this every day until you are satisfied there are no longer any eggs or live louse.



Points to remember!

- Eggs have to be within 1 cm of the scalp to hatch,
- Not everyone starts itching (hence the need for once a week take a peek!)
- No need to be kept off school

- Head lice are a **common occurrence** and children catch them from many sources such as family, friends, clubs and sometimes school

No medicated treatment is 100% effective. Head lice have built resistance to many chemical insecticides and there are greater side effects. Non pesticide lotions are now considered more effective and you should look for those that contain **dimeticone**. These work by a physical mode rather than chemical mode, which reduces risk to asthmatics, pregnant women and babies. At least two applications seven days apart are needed to kill lice over the hatching period.



Treatment should only be applied if a living, moving louse has been found – never ‘just in case’!

CHECK>TREAT>COMPLETE

How do I check for and treat headlice?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jy9HRqAd-VE>

Further information can be found at:

<http://www.medinfo.co.uk/conditions/headlice.html#checking>

<http://www.bad.org.uk/shared/get-file.ashx?id=207&itemtype=document>

<http://www.patient.co.uk/health/head-lice-and-nits>

