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Thongsley Fields Primary & Nursery School

Head Lice

Information & Procedures

Inclusion

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Thongsley Fields Primary & Nursery School

Head Lice Information & Procedures

1. Context

Head lice are a wider societal problem and contrary to popular belief, research shows that transmission of lice within the classroom is relatively rare. When it does occur, it is usually from a close or 'best' friend.

What we know:

- You can only get head lice through direct head-to-head contact with a person that has them.
- Head lice can't jump, hop or swim.
- There is no evidence that head lice have a preference for either clean or dirty hair.
- It is extremely rare to get head lice by sharing hats, combs or pillows.

You also don't need to wash clothing or bedding, because head lice that fall off your head (e.g. onto hats or pillows) are likely to die soon after.

Studies of school children indicate that approximately 4% of the population at any one time has head lice - at Thongsley Fields, this would be approximately 10 children across the school. Outbreaks are very rare and there is usually a perception of an outbreak rather than a reality.

2. Life span & diagnosis

The life span of a head louse is short. The adult will lay 5-6 eggs a day, glued to the base of a hair near the scalp. The egg will take 7-10 days to hatch. The empty white egg case is often called a 'nit'. It takes a further 6-14 days for the louse to mature and begin to reproduce. The whole cycle takes between 2-3 weeks.

Finding a living, moving louse on a head is the only sure way to diagnose the presence of head lice. There are different ways of treating an infection including, many lotions and the wet combing method. However, in order to be effective, the treatment needs to be correctly applied and repeated as directed. Regular and meticulous use of a specialised comb to check the hair following initial treatment may be required for up to 6 weeks in order to remove all live louse. Failure to do so will enable the life cycle to continue – **parents often complain that their child has 'caught them again' whereas in reality it can be the same, original cycle that has not yet been broken.**

3. What the research says

Recent national and international research and guidance is clear about what actions schools should and should not take when dealing with incidents of head lice.

At Thongsley Fields, we:

- will NOT send out blanket warning letters
- will NOT routinely send children home
- will NOT routinely inspect children's hair i.e. 'nit nurse'.

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4. What the school *will* do

If a member of staff sees a live, moving louse in a child's hair they:

- will consult with a member of the Leadership Team and
- will inform parents or carers preferably via a telephone call or if that is not possible, by text message or in person at the end of the school day to inform them that a live louse has been seen.

This will allow parents time to organise appropriate treatment for later that same evening and before the child returns to school the following day.

Only if a child is in distress or very uncomfortable will the school recommend that the parent or carer collect their child from school early. This decision will only be made by a member of the school's Leadership Team in conjunction with the child's class teacher.

If a child is repeatedly suffering from head lice then, with the parent or carer's agreement, we will contact the school nursing service to seek further advice.

5. Proactive monitoring

Head lice will not be eradicated in the foreseeable future, but a sensible, informed approach, based on fact not mythology, will help to limit the problem.

There is no good way of *preventing* head lice.

The best way to *prevent them spreading* is to check your whole family's heads for lice regularly. You can do this by detection combing on a weekly basis. This will help you find any lice before they have a chance to breed and lay eggs. You can then treat them quickly to prevent them from spreading to other people.

6. Useful websites

NHS UK

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/head-lice-and-nits/>

Community hygiene concern

<http://www.chc.org>

Once a week – take a peek campaign

<http://www.onceaweektakeapeek.com>

For more information and advice, please see our school website.

ONCE A WEEK TAKE A PEEK

An easy-to-use guide
for parents **to fight back**
against head lice



Produced by:

Hedrin

In association with:

Medical Entomology Centre
Insect Research & Development Limited



HEAD LICE

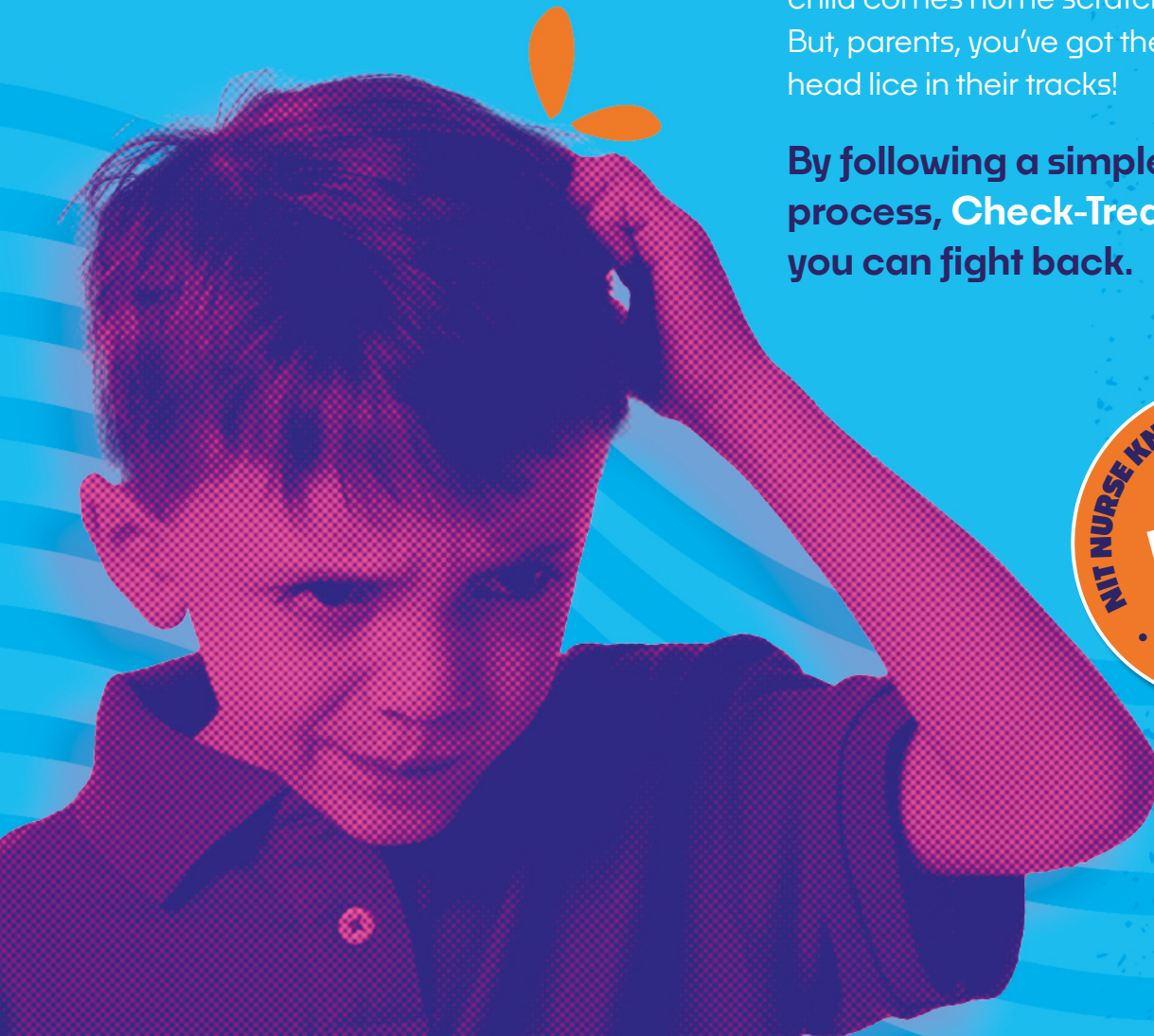
TOGETHER WE

CAN FIGHT THEM!

Head lice are a normal part of childhood - surveys of parents found that nearly 1 in 10 primary school children have lice at any one time.

If you're a parent then you probably know what a hassle it can be to treat head lice and just how frustrating it can be when your child comes home scratching their head. But, parents, you've got the power to stop head lice in their tracks!

By following a simple three step process, Check-Treat-Complete, you can fight back.





HOW TO CHECK

1

Checking for head lice shouldn't be considered a big deal, it's just a normal part of a family's personal hygiene routine like brushing teeth or washing hair

2

It's best to check for head lice using a comb made for the purpose, ideally white so they can be easily seen and with teeth no more than 0.3mm apart in order to trap head lice

3

Combing through the hair when wet, or after applying a conditioner, may make the process more comfortable

4

Good lighting is important and so is comfort to ensure your child stays still. Perhaps distract them with the TV or a book

CHECK • CHECK • CHECK • CHECK • CHECK • CHECK • CHECK • CHECK • CHECK • CHECK

You should check your child's hair regularly, ideally once a week – a good way to remember this is **ONCE A WEEK, TAKE A PEEK.**

HOW TO DIAGNOSE HEAD LICE

To diagnose a case of head lice you need to find them alive. This is when you need to use a treatment. They move fast and are small, so they can be tricky to find!

SIZING UP HEAD LICE

Head lice range in size from a full stop to a sesame seed.



Actual size in stages of growth.



WHERE TO PEEK

- 1 Close to the scalp**
- 2 Behind the ears**
- 3 The back of the neck**
- 4 The top of the head**
- 5 Under the fringe**

WHAT TO PEEK FOR



Adult lice are 2-4 mm long, immature lice are even smaller



Live lice remain close to the scalp



Nits are dead or empty egg shells - if you have already treated for head lice then simply remove these by hand or by combing

YOUR HOME IS A LICE FREE ZONE

Head lice do not survive away from the head. Therefore, there's no fear of lice spreading to clothes, furniture or bedding, so excessive cleaning is not needed. If live lice are found on one member of your family, simply check everyone's hair and then treat as necessary.



MYTH:

Only dirty children get head lice

FACT:

Having head lice has nothing to do with personal hygiene

SHOULD YOUR CHILD STAY AT HOME?

If children are checked for head lice on a weekly basis and treated straight away when live lice are found, then they can attend school, child care and all other activities just as usual. However, ask them to avoid head-to-head contact with other children until all the lice are gone.



HOW TO **TREAT** HEAD LICE

There are **FOUR** types of head lice treatment:

1



NON-PESTICIDE

Non-pesticide treatments work in a different way from conventional pesticide treatments. By coating the outside of the lice, they either disrupt their ability to manage water or attack the waxy cuticle on the louse, causing them to die. These physical modes of action mean there is theoretically no chance for the lice to build up a resistance. There are three main ingredient options currently in use, dimeticone, octanediol and isopropyl myristate.

2



PESTICIDE

Pesticide based treatments have been around for many years but there is evidence that head lice already have, and continue to, develop resistance to some of them. There are two main types which work by poisoning the lice.



3



WET COMBING

Wet combing can remove lice and nits, however it's labour intensive and requires a high level of commitment from the parent or carer, and co-operation from the child. It is recommended that the correct equipment, particularly a fine-tooth comb, is used to increase the chances of success.

4



ALTERNATIVE TREATMENTS

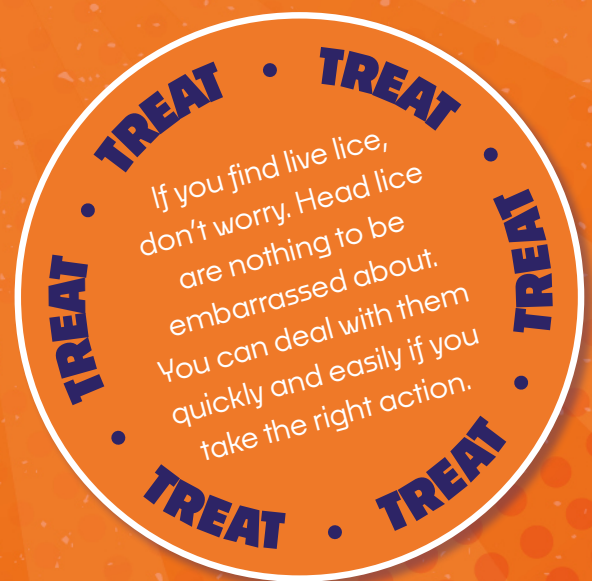
Alternative treatments and herbal options are available although their effectiveness varies.

MYTH:

Head lice can jump from one head to another

FACT:

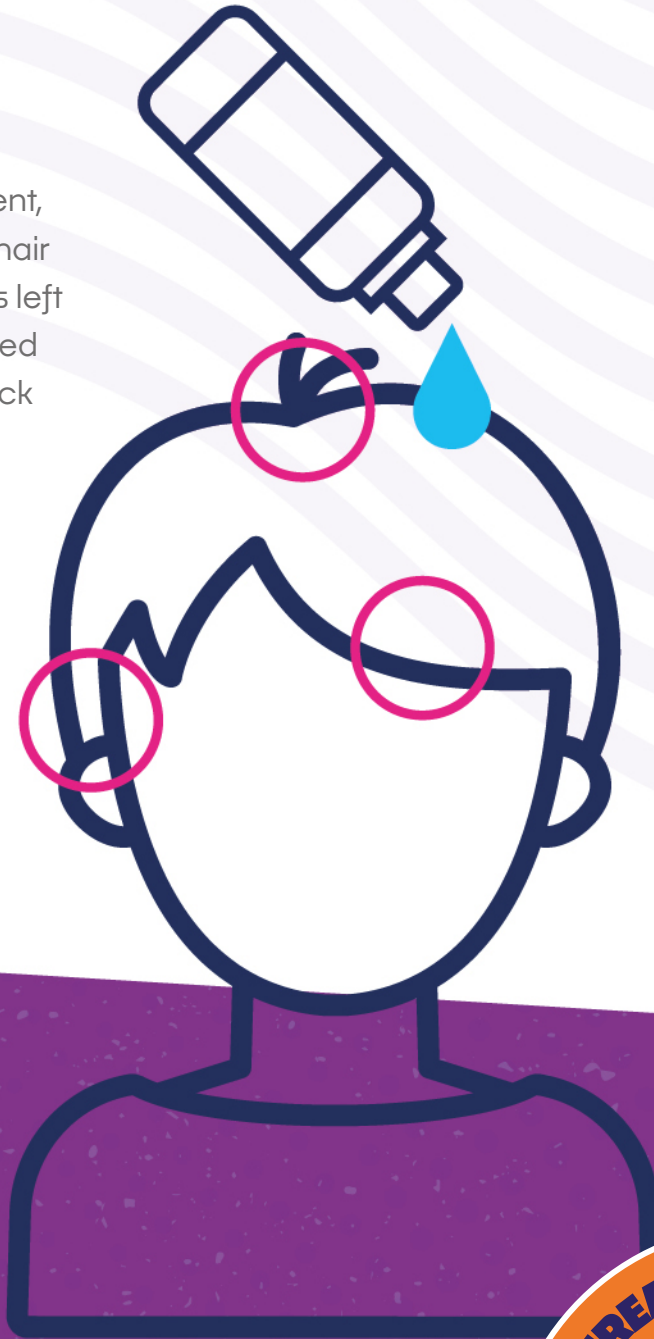
Head lice can only transfer from a child's head through moderately prolonged head-to-head contact



APPLYING TREATMENT

A

When applying treatment, cover the full length of hair and ensure treatment is left on for the recommended time – following on-pack instructions carefully



B

Treatment should only be applied if a living, moving louse is found – never 'just in case'. Ask your pharmacist for advice on protecting against head lice

C

Keep lotion out of eyes and off the face – do not use the hair dryer and keep away from flames, stoves, cigarettes and other sources of heat





COMPLETE
THE JOB

Once treatment has been applied, more action may be required to ensure the problem is dealt with.

- Check your child's hair a couple of days after treatment to ensure that all the head lice have been killed
- If the pack instructions specify that a second application is required, repeat the treatment seven days after the first application to kill any nymphs (small baby lice) which have hatched since the first treatment was applied
- Continue to check for head lice on a regular, weekly basis –

**ONCE A WEEK,
TAKE A PEEK**

REMOVING THOSE STUBBORN NITS

Despite what a lot of people think, it's head lice eggs that are called nits – not the actual head lice. To make them stick to the hair shafts, lice produce a strong glue as they lay the nits. Sometimes after treatment, the empty eggshells can stay stuck to the hair until the glue weakens over time. You may therefore wish to use a fine-tooth comb to help remove the empty eggshells after treatment.

IF THE PROBLEM WON'T GO AWAY

If you still find live lice after you finish the treatment, either it's failed or there has been a re-infestation. If the treatment failed you'll usually find lice of all life stages, but a re-infestation will usually consist of a few adult lice. You'll need to treat again so make sure:

- You read the instructions carefully and follow them exactly
- You use enough treatment to cover the whole head and full length of hair
- You leave the treatment on for long enough
- You complete the treatment course
- Ask your pharmacy for advice if required

HOW TO PROTECT AGAINST HEAD LICE

A special, leave-in conditioning spray clinically proven to protect against infestations is available in pharmacies. The product, which contains the non-pesticide 1% octanediol, works by breaking the life-cycle of the head lice and preventing further breeding and migrating. There are also various home remedies that parents claim can repel head lice and prevent infestation, but evidence to support how effective they are is very limited. Speak to your local pharmacy for more information.

ADVERT

KILL LICE AND EGGS FAST WITH HEDRIN

Dealing with head lice can be straightforward if you take the right action. Enter Hedrin, the trusted range that offers fast-acting and easy-to-use products to keep head lice away. It is easy to see why Hedrin is the No.1 choice for parents* when it comes to head lice*.

PARENTS' NO.1 CHOICE*



HEDRIN DETECTION COMB

An effective tool to help you spot head lice and remove eggs.

DETECT



HEDRIN TREAT & GO

A fuss-free treatment that can be left in a child's hair throughout the day or overnight.



HEDRIN ONCE

A fast-acting treatment that kills head lice and eggs in just 5 minutes.



HEDRIN SHAMPOO

An easy-to-use shampoo that kills head lice, removes eggs and cleans hair, all in one go.



HEDRIN PROTECT & GO

A hassle-free conditioning spray that's clinically proven to help protect against head lice.

PROTECT

TREAT

Hedrin

*Intelligent Market Research February 2023

ALL IT TAKES IS THREE SIMPLE STEPS

1 CHECK

- Check your child's hair once a week
- Use a detection comb to trap head lice, preferably white in colour so they can easily be seen
- If you find live lice, consult your pharmacy team for treatment advice
- If head lice are spotted, take a close look at all the family, including yourself, and ask close family and friends to check as well

2 TREAT

- Only treat if live lice are identified
- Use a clinically proven treatment. Those with a physical mode of action present no known risk of lice resistance
- Leave the treatment on for the recommended time for maximum effect – leaving it on for longer will not make it more effective

3 COMPLETE

- Check that all head lice have gone within 2-3 days of the final application to complete the treatment
- If the pack instructions specify that a second application is required, repeat the treatment seven days after the first application to kill any nymphs which have hatched since the first treatment was applied
- Continue to check for head lice on a regular, weekly basis
- Regular use of a leave-in conditioning spray (1% octanediol), clinically proven to protect against head lice infestations, can help prevent future outbreaks by killing lice before they have chance to spread



**YOU SHOULD CHECK
YOUR CHILD'S HAIR REGULARLY,
IDEALLY ONCE A WEEK – A GOOD
WAY TO REMEMBER THIS IS:**

**ONCE A
WEEK TAKE A
PEEK**

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