



### **WHERE DO HEAD LICE COME FROM?**

Head lice have been around for thousands of years. As with any insect, they learn to adapt to their environment in order to survive. We are never going to be completely rid of them, but we can make managing them easier.

### **DO HEAD LICE JUMP OR FLY?**

Head lice do not have wings so they cannot fly. They cannot jump because they do not have 'knees'.

### **SO HOW DO HEAD LICE MOVE AROUND?**

Head lice CRAWL very fast and require head to head contact for transmission. It is possible that because of the way young children play, head lice are seen more frequently amongst primary school children than adolescents or adults.

### **WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR CHECKING AND TREATING HEAD LICE?**

Like similar health conditions such as scabies, ringworm etc., it is a parent or carer's responsibility to treat and care for their child.

### **DO HEAD LICE LIVE IN CARPETS, CLOTHES, HATS OR SHEETS?**

No. Head lice very rarely fall from the head. They require blood to survive. Head lice feed 3-4 times a day without blood, will dehydrate in 6 hours in a dry climate and in 24hrs in a humid climate.

An egg requires warmth to hatch and this is the reason why they are laid close to the scalp. The further away from the scalp, the less likely they are to survive.

### **IS IT TRUE THAT HEAD LICE ONLY LIKE CLEAN HAIR?**

No. Head lice are not selective. They don't care if hair is long, short, blonde, brown, washed this morning or last week. As long as they are warm, and have blood to drink, then they are content.

### **WHAT TREATMENT KILLS 100% OF HEAD LICE & EGGS?**

There is no single treatment that kills 100% of head lice & eggs. Whichever treatment you use it can take time and persistence to get rid of head lice. Use a method that will not risk the health of your child.

## IS THERE A WAY TO PREVENT HEAD LICE?

No. it's important to check your child's head regularly with conditioner and comb even when you don't think your child has head lice. There is no research to prove that chemical or herbal therapies can prevent head lice.

## HOW DOES THE CONDITIONER AND COMB METHOD WORK?

It's a very cheap and effective way of finding head lice. Hair conditioner does not kill lice, but it does stun them for about 20 minutes, meaning they do not move around, and it is difficult for them to hang on. This gives you time to comb through the hair with a 'bone' comb.

## HOW DOES A CHEMICAL TREATMENT WORK?

Only use currently recommended treatments. Your pharmacist can advise.

## DO SOME PRODUCTS WORK BETTER THAN OTHERS?

Over time, head lice may develop resistance to some chemicals. Again your pharmacist can advise.

## WHY DO YOU HAVE TO TREAT AGAIN IN SEVEN DAYS TIME?

Head lice take 6-7 days to hatch. And when you treat, it's easy to miss an egg or two. By treating again in seven days, you are aiming to kill and comb out any head lice that have since hatched from eggs which were missed.

## SHOULD I TREAT EVERYONE IN THE FAMILY?

It is important to check each family member, using conditioner and comb, **but only treat those with live lice.**

## WHY DOES MY CHILD KEEP GETTING RE-INFECTED?

Re-infection is the **least** likely reason for head lice returning in a week's time. If eggs do not die, or were not removed during the original treatment they may hatch and the life cycle starts all over again. To break this life cycle you must re-treat (regardless of treatment method) seven days after the first treatment and continue with weekly checking.

## DOES MY CHILD HAVE TO MISS SCHOOL?

A child can attend school as soon as treatment has commenced. Head lice are not the fault of schools – it is a community problem which must be dealt with at home.

