

NHS Minor Ailments Service

Everyone can go to their pharmacist for advice or to buy medicine for a minor illness or ailment. This NHS Service is for people, including children who don't pay prescription charges. It means that if your pharmacist thinks you need it then they can give you a medicine on the NHS without you having to pay for it. **Headlice is considered a minor ailment.**

Lotions

These come with instructions and your Health Visitor or Pharmacist can advise on which products to use.

If the problem persists then you should discuss this further with your Health Visitor, as repeated use of lotions and rinses is not recommended.

Who can help

- Health Visitor – Chris Harker
- General Practitioner
- Local Pharmacist
- School Nurse – Liz Gordon
- Learning Disabilities Nurse – Andrea Holmes

For further information contact:

**Health Promotion Resources Centre,
Brevik House, South Road, Lerwick,
ZE1 0TG. Tel: 01595 743086**

There is no shame in having lice – you can catch them and you can spread them – it's just like getting flu.

**KEEP CHECKING THROUGH THE
HOLIDAYS**

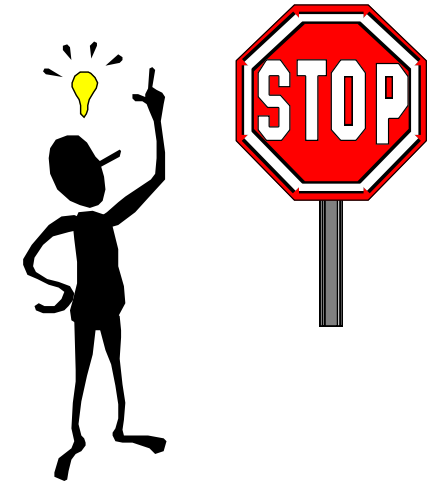
For further information see:

- **National Guidance on Managing Head Lice Infection in Children (March 2003)**
- **Shetland Health Board Leaflet – The Prevention and Treatment of Headlice.**

Some Facts

- Headlice are small insects roughly the size of a match head when fully-grown and usually grey or brown in colour.
- Headlice feed by sucking blood through the scalp of their host. The female lays eggs in sacs (nits) glued to hair, where the warmth of the scalp will hatch them. The eggs are very small and take 7-10 days to hatch. Lice take 7-14 days to become fully-grown.
- Lice like clean hair. They also like adults. They cannot fly or jump or swim, but spread by clambering from head to head. Lice can only be passed on through prolonged head-to-head contact.
- There tends to be a peak in headlice outbreaks when children return to school in the Autumn.

Bells Brae Primary School



Guide to the Prevention and Treatment of Headlice

Head Lice

It is now well known that the main source of headlice is not children at school but adults in the general community who are long-term carriers of lice. They are usually unaware they have lice because their scalps have become desensitised over time. They therefore unknowingly pass their lice onto children with whom they have prolonged head to head contact. These children may then take lice back to school.

School Nurses and Health Visitors no longer routinely inspect heads. They give advice and support so that children, parents and other adults can take on more effective anti-louse hair care for themselves.



How to be lice free

Make sure your own and your child's hair is combed thoroughly twice a day, especially at bedtime. The comb will disturb or damage any lice that have been picked up during the day before they start night time breeding. Disturbed lice do not breed and damaged lice soon die.

Detection Combing

Check your child's head for lice by 'detection combing' every week and whenever you hear that they have been in head to head contact with someone who has lice. 'Detection combing' allow you to look for lice off the head where they cannot move much and are easier to identify. It is also important to check your own hair.

To 'detection comb,' comb through damp hair from the roots using a fine toothed comb (preferably a bug busting type comb) over a pale surface. Comb in sections if the hair is thick. Check the surface to see if any lice have been combed out.

What to do if you find lice

Check everyone in the household as soon as possible and preferably at the same time. You should check anyone who has been in prolonged head-to-head contact with an affected person.

There are two main methods for treating headlice – the wet combing method or using lotions. The wet combing method removes headlice by making it difficult for them to either grip onto the hair or to escape. The lotions kill lice and their eggs. The wet combing method is preferred because it avoids the use of chemicals. Weekly checks, by 'wet combing', are the most effective method of detection.

Wet Combing

1. Wash hair as normal and do not dry hair, comb through with a wide tooth comb to remove tangles.
2. Apply plenty of hair conditioner.
3. Whilst the hair is very wet, comb through the hair from the roots to the top with a fine toothed comb, such as a 'bug busting' type comb.
4. Make sure the teeth of the comb slot into the hair at the roots with every stroke.
5. This procedure should be carried out over a pale surface such as a work surface or white pillowcase.
6. Check the surface to see if any lice have been combed out.
7. Clear the comb of lice between each stroke.
8. **If you find any headlice, then repeat this every 3-4 days for two weeks.** Also all other family members should be checked and, if necessary, treated.
9. Checks should continue following treatment to ensure that it has been effective and to detect any re-infection.

