

My child keeps getting re-infected with head lice. What can I do about it?

The first thing is to check that your child is re-infected, a live living louse is the sign of infection. The scalp can itch due to other causes, which can be misinterpreted as infection.

If a live living louse is found then it is important if a previous treatment failed because it wasn't carried out as per instructions. You can obtain further advice from either your Health Centre or your local pharmacist.

Remember that all close contacts should be checked thoroughly for signs of head lice infection and where living, moving lice are found treatment must be given.

Why can't I treat my child's head with lotion just in case he/she has or gets head lice?

If no sign of infection then DO NOT treat. Head lice can develop resistance to a particular treatment, and the affected person will be treated unnecessarily with an insecticide.

As a parent or a carer it is important that you routinely check your child's head at least weekly using a head lice detection comb. The correct technique is described within the NHS Forth Valley "Head Lice - how to check for and treat head lice", leaflet.

Useful Contact Numbers:

Health Centre

Pharmacy

School

Head lice

Frequently Asked Questions



"A Guide for Parents/Carers"

This leaflet is to be read in conjunction with NHS Forth Valley "Head Lice - how to check for and treat head lice", leaflet.

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Is there an epidemic of head lice in our area?

The simple answer is no. Head lice will be present in any community at any one time.

Is it a UK problem?

No. Head lice are a world-wide problem. They are found in every country in all continents.

Why have schools stopped sending out head louse “Alert Letters”?

It was found that the letters sent to whole classes served no useful purpose and often resulted in parents or carers treating their children ‘just in case’ which is not only unnecessary but may be harmful.

Why does my child not have regular head inspections by the school nurse?

Occasional checks of dry hair, whether by a health professional, parent or carers have not been found to be effective. What is needed is a weekly check by parents/carers of all children in the family using a head louse detection comb to detect head lice at an early stage. Further help about this will be found in the NHS Forth Valley “Head Lice - how to check for and treat head lice”, leaflet.

Surely it’s a school problem and schools must sort it out?

Head lice are a problem of the whole community, not just schools. They are mostly caught from head to head contact with close family and friends. This is why careful examination of all possible contacts is important.

How do I know if my child has head lice?

The only way to be certain is if you comb their hair, using a special detection comb, and finding a living, moving louse. The presence of nit cases, which are empty shells are not proof of infection. The cases can be there without living louse being present. Parents and carers should use the NHS Forth Valley “Head Lice - how to check for and treat head lice”, leaflet.

I’ve lost my copy of the leaflet, how can I get another?

Your Health Centre or school should have spare copies.

Where can I get advice and treatments for head lice?

You may be asked to provide evidence of the lice found, this can be done by sticking them onto a piece of sellotape and then onto a piece of paper.

You can go to your **local pharmacy** and purchase head lice lotion over the counter. Your local pharmacist should be able to advise you accordingly.

Alternatively you can contact your local **Health Centre** for advice and treatment.

If you require a prescription for head lice lotion this should be provided for you at your Health Centre along with instructions on how to treat your child’s head and any close contacts within your family who you have also found to have live, living lice present. Prescriptions for children are free.

Remember - Insecticide lotion that is required to remain in contact with the head for up to or over 8 hours has proven efficacy, shampoos, mousse, zappers and tea tree oil products, etc have not.

How do I get rid of head lice?

If you have found a live, moving louse then give ONE complete treatment of TWO applications of lotion SEVEN days apart, leaving the lotion on as advised by the manufacturer. This treatment will ensure that any lice which hatch out after the first application will be destroyed by the second.

If you give only one application, then re-occurrence will be very likely. The second application must be given.