

GUIDELINES ON THE TREATMENT OF HEADLICE

Although the Scottish Government has directed that schools no longer issue letters home when instances of headlice are reported, we believe it would be helpful to send out information on a regular basis.

Please note: Below are repeated the most recent guidelines issued from Lothian Health at the time of print:

INFORMATION FOR FAMILIES - DETECTION/COMBING PROTOCOL

Most infestation occurs in the home or close community contacts. You need:

1. A detection comb (from the community pharmacist or supermarket, etc)
2. An ordinary comb
3. Good lighting

- Detection combing is recommended at least once per week as routine and as soon as possible after any close contact has been found with headlice infestation.
- Wash hair well, (conditioner may be applied to make combing easier) then dry it with a towel. The hair should be damp, not dripping.
- Make sure there is good light. Daylight is best.
- Comb with a detection comb. Start with the teeth of the detection comb touching the skin of the scalp at the top of the head. Draw the comb carefully towards the edge of the hair. Look carefully at the teeth of the comb in a good light to see if any lice are present.
- Repeat this from the top of the head to the edge of the hair in all directions working round the head. It can take 15 minutes or so to do it properly for each head.
- If there are head lice, you will find one or more lice on the teeth of the comb.
- If you find what you think is a moving louse, stick it to a piece of paper and cover with clear adhesive tape. If necessary, show this to the nurse, pharmacist or GP for confirmation and advice regarding treatment.
- Clean comb under the tap. A nailbrush may help.

ADDITIONAL NOTES

- Check damp hair by combing at least once a week.
- Detection combs can be purchased from the community pharmacist. Some treatment preparations contain a detection comb.
- If you need help or advice regarding the detection procedure, ask you local pharmacist, school/practice nurse, community nurse, health visitor or GP.
- Do **not** treat unless you are sure that you have found a **living, moving louse**.