

How do I get rid of head lice?

There is a convenient service provided by most pharmacists to help you detect and treat head lice properly. The pharmacist will talk with you, give you a free comb and show you how to detection comb the members of your household. If you find that you need treatment, the pharmacist can prescribe the best one for each member of your household.

The treatment will be free if you normally get prescriptions for free. Otherwise you will be asked to pay the usual prescription charge.

This service is only available for people who are registered with a Kirklees GP.

Facts about head lice

Head lice don't prefer dirty hair

In fact they probably don't care much whether hair is dirty or clean. Short hair might make it easier for them to get from one head to another.

Head lice can't fly

And they can't swim, hop or jump.

It's hard to see head lice in hair

Most people with head lice don't have more than about 8 to 12 at any one time. These would be difficult to see.

One of the signs of head lice

People with head lice might find that their pillows get dirty more quickly than usual.

What are Head Lice?



Scheme run by:
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NHS

Your questions answered...

What are head lice?

Head lice are small insects, about the size of a sesame seed (the one you find on burger buns).

Where do they live?

They live on the head keeping close to the skin. They don't tend to move very far down the strands of the hair.

They only live on human beings. You can't catch them from household pets.

What are nits?

Nits are not the same thing as head lice. Head lice are the insects that move around the head. Head lice lay eggs which they glue to the hair. When the egg hatches, it turns white. This white empty egg shell is still stuck to the hair. The nit is the empty egg shell.

If you find nits, it does not mean you have head lice. The nit will stay stuck to the hair until it grows out.

Have I got head lice?

You only have head lice if you find a living moving louse in your hair.

Who gets head lice?

Anybody can get head lice. Children may get them more often as they spend more time with their heads together. Adults can get them as well.

Where do you catch head lice?

Head lice are passed when heads are touching. This is most often between close family and friends, in the home, community and during times of play, rather than between children sitting in schools.

Head lice are as common during school holidays as during term time. Parents start to worry more about head lice when children go back to school as they think head lice are being caught there.

You don't get head lice from objects that hair touches such as a chair back. You don't catch head lice from combs, brushes, hats or scarves.

How do you catch head lice?

Head lice walk from one head to another when heads are touching.

The longer and more often you have head to head contact with someone who has head lice, the more likely it is that you will get them too.

Do head lice cause itching straight away?

It usually takes two to three months for people to get an itch due to head lice. The itch is due to an allergy to the head lice and some people will never suffer from itching.

Most people only look for head lice if they suffer itching. By then they have had head lice for two to three months. You should check every week for head lice.

Can you prevent head lice?

The best way to combat head lice is for families and households to check their own heads regularly. This way they can find head lice quickly, treat them and make sure that you don't pass them on to family and friends.

The way to check heads is called "detection combing". It should be done once a week, or more often if you want.

If a living, moving louse is found on someone's head, check other members of the household as well. Treat everyone who has head lice at the same time. Don't treat anyone who hasn't got head lice, it won't help.

You should also think back to who has been in contact with you, so that you can let them know and they can check for head lice as well.

