



WHAT ARE HEADLICE?

Headlice are small insects that live and multiply in the hair. They feed on blood from biting the skin. They do not have wings, so they spread from one person to another by close contact.

FACTS

- ✓ Do not carry or spread any diseases.
- ✓ Only found on humans and do not live on animals.
- ✓ Cannot survive for more than two days in any other environment, like carpet or furniture.
- ✓ Nits are the eggs of head lice. Brown-black nits are eggs that haven't hatched, and white nits are eggs that have already hatched.
- ✓ Dandruff and headlice can look similar. Dandruff can be easily brushed off whereas head lice cannot be flicked off.

SYMPTOMS OF HEADLICE

- ✓ Scratching the head especially around the back of their neck and behind the ears.
- ✓ Small, oval-shaped, white or brown-black nits at the roots of the hair.
- ✓ Red and irritated scalp.

HOW TO CHECK FOR HEAD LICE

- ✓ Sit your child in a well-lit area. Make sure their hair is dry.
- ✓ Divide hair into small sections.
- ✓ Use a fine-tooth lice comb. After each stroke, wipe the comb on a white tissue or paper towel to check for lice or nits. Lice would be tiny brown insects with legs, and nits would be white or tan oval eggs stuck close to the scalp.
- ✓ Comb each section until nothing is found, then move on to the next.

GETTING RID OF HEADLICE

WET COMBING

Wet combing involves using white conditioner and a fine-tooth lice comb to remove head lice and nits. The conditioner helps trap lice, making them easier to comb out. Be patient and thorough, as missing even a few can cause lice to come back.

CHEMICAL TREATMENTS

Available at pharmacies and supermarkets and contain insecticides to kill lice. After use, comb through hair to check for dead lice. If live lice remain, the treatment may not have worked. Most treatments don't kill nits, so repeat after 7 days to catch newly hatched lice.

Not usually recommended for children under 2 years - use wet combing instead. Check and treat everyone in the household if one person has lice to prevent spreading. Wash bedding in hot water (above 60°C) or dry on a hot setting. Avoid sharing combs, brushes, and hats. Repeat treatment if lice return.

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