

# RIVERBRIDGE PRIMARY SCHOOL

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## Parent Information Sheet

### How to treat nits

Head lice, sometimes called nits, are common in children. Find out how to get rid of them if your child is affected. You can treat the lice at home by wet combing the hair using a head lice comb or by using medicated lotion (see below).

#### **Wet combing**

This involves removing the head lice by systematically combing the hair using a special fine-toothed comb with a spacing of less than 0.3mm. Combs are available from pharmacies or you can order them online from the [Community Hygiene Concern](#).

- Wash the hair using ordinary shampoo and apply plenty of conditioner, before using a wide-toothed comb to straighten and untangle the hair.
- Once the comb moves freely through the hair without dragging, switch to the louse detection comb. Make sure the teeth of the comb slot into the hair at the roots with the bevel-edge of the teeth lightly touching the scalp.
- Draw the comb down to the ends of the hair with every stroke and check the comb for lice.
- Remove lice by wiping or rinsing the comb.
- Work methodically through the hair, section by section, so that the whole head of hair is combed through.
- Rinse out conditioner and repeat the combing procedure in the wet hair.
- Repeat the procedure on days five, nine and 13 so that you clear young lice as they hatch, before they have time to reach maturity.

The length of time it will take to comb your child's hair will depend on the type of hair your child has and how long it is. For example, short, straight hair can be quickly prepared and can be fine-toothed combed in a few minutes, whereas longer, curlier hair will take longer to comb.

#### **Medicated lotion or spray**

Using medicated lotion or spray is an alternative method of treating head lice. However, no medicated treatment is 100% effective. Your pharmacist will be able to recommend an over-the-counter lotion or spray.

Medicated treatments should only be used if a living (moving) head louse is found.

#### **Afro hair**

Afro hair or tightly curled hair can make treating a head lice infestation particularly difficult.

If your child has afro hair and they develop head lice, keeping their hair short will make treating it easier. Alternatively, you could try plaiting or braiding their hair as this can make it difficult for head lice to attach themselves to the bottom of the hair strand.

Using a medicated lotion, such as dimeticone, and methodically combing small sections of hair at a time with a lice comb, will usually prove effective.

#### **Head lice and clothing**

There is no need to wash or fumigate clothing or bedding that comes into contact with head lice.

Head lice can only survive on humans and they die after a day or two of being away from the human scalp.

Head lice that fall off the scalp are likely to be close to death (their life span is about three weeks).

For more information please logon to the NHS website at:  
<http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/Head-lice/Pages/Treatment.aspx>