



Re-founded 1555

# Ripon Grammar School

*Engineering Specialism within a Grammar School*



Dear Parent or Guardian

We have been made aware of an incidence of head lice in the lower school. We recommend that you check your child's hair thoroughly and treat accordingly. If in any doubt we suggest you contact your GP for further information.

The following advice is taken from the NHS website [www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Head-lice](http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Head-lice)

## How to spot head lice

Head lice can be difficult to detect, even when you closely inspect your child's head.

If you think your child may have head lice:

- Check your child's hair. The most common places for head lice to lurk are in the hair behind the ears and at the nape of the neck.
- If you still can't spot any lice, comb the child's hair with a special 'nit comb'. These are available from most chemists. It's easier to spot head lice as they fall out if you comb the hair over a piece of white paper.

Find out more about how to [spot head lice](#).

## Treating head lice

If head lice are present, you need to treat your child.

You should only treat your child if you find live head lice, which confirms a live infestation. Don't treat 'just in case'.

Head lice are tough. They can't be killed by washing with normal shampoo or normal combing. Because they reproduce so quickly, you've got to kill them before they spread.

If your child has head lice, check everyone in the family. You'll need to treat everyone affected to get rid of them. You can treat head lice by wet-combing hair with a special comb, or by using medicated lotions or sprays. **Head lice can be difficult to treat due to a high re-infestation rate and their ability to develop resistance to traditional insecticides contained in some medications.**

It is thought head lice will not develop immunity to the newer silicone and oil-based preparations because they have a physical rather than a chemical action on lice.

After a head lice infestation has been confirmed, you can treat the lice at home by wet combing the hair using a head lice comb or by using medicated lotion (see below).

However, neither will protect against re-infestation if head-to-head contact is made with someone with head lice during the treatment period.

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## Wet combing

The wet combing method involves removing the head lice by systematically combing the hair using a special fine-toothed comb.

The comb's teeth should be spaced less than 0.3mm, but at least 0.2mm, apart. Lice can be trapped between the teeth of nit combs with a tooth spacing of less than 0.19mm and remain unseen.

Combs are available from pharmacies or you can order them online from the [Community Hygiene Concern](#).

The use of medicated products is not necessary for wet combing. This is advantageous because head lice are becoming more resistant to the insecticides commonly used to remove them.

However, for wet combing to be effective, it involves regular and thorough combing which is time consuming. The wet combing method is described below.

- 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. Crème rinses and shampoos are not thought effective and are therefore not recommended.

Ensure you have enough lotion to treat everyone in your family who is affected. Use enough to coat the scalp and the length of the hair during each application.

Follow instructions that come with the medicated lotion or spray when applying it. Depending on the product you are using, the length of time it will need to be left on the head may vary from 10 minutes to 8 hours.

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The normal advice is to treat the hair and repeat the treatment after seven days. Some medicated products also supply a comb for removing dead lice and eggs.

Traditional insecticides must not be used more than once a week for three weeks in a row. Some products also carry a fire warning.

Some medicated products may be capable of killing eggs as well as lice, although there is no certainty of this. Check for baby lice hatching from eggs 3-5 five days after you use a product, and again 10-12 days afterwards.

A minimum of two applications of lotion are needed to kill lice over the hatching period because the lotions do not always kill louse eggs.

If the lice appear unaffected by the product (some lice may develop resistance to particular insecticides), or if the problem persists, seek advice from your school nurse, health visitor, pharmacist or GP.

## Cautions

Always seek the advice of a healthcare professional before using medicated head lice lotions on the following groups:

- young babies (under six months old)
- pregnant women
- people with [asthma](#) or [allergies](#)

It is recommended that pregnant women use either wet combing or 4% dimeticone lotion, which is licensed for use during pregnancy and breastfeeding.

You should always carefully read instructions before using medicated head lice lotions.

I hope the enclosed information is of use. If you have any further questions, please telephone school.

Yours sincerely

Miss M J Murray

Deputy Headteacher

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