

DELAPRE PRIMARY SCHOOL – ADVICE TO PARENTS
LATEST INFORMATION ON HEAD LICE – September 2016

The best cure for head lice?

Ordinary conditioner removes head lice eggs 'as effectively as specialised products'

- Head lice eggs are notoriously hard to remove as they are glued to the hairs
- They can even stay in place after treatment with lice-killing substances
- Conditioner as effective as specialised products because it acts as lubricant
- Ordinary hair conditioner removes head lice eggs as effectively as special products, new research suggests.

Eggs from head lice are notoriously difficult to remove because the female lice lay them directly onto strands of hair and cement them in place with a glue-like substance.

They are so well attached to the hairs that they can stay in place even after hair has been treated with pediculicides - substances used to kill lice.

Now, new research, published in the Journal of Medical Entomology, suggests people who pay for these products are wasting their money as the eggs can be removed equally effectively using conditioner.

Treatment with conditioner reduces the friction in hair. As a consequence, conditioners will ease nit removal.

While removing eggs is a vital part of treating head lice, and they are hardest thing to remove because they are glued to the hairs, just removing them is not enough to remove an infestation.

The lice themselves also have to be removed and, ideally, **they need to be removed within seven days of hatching** because, otherwise, they will start to lay more eggs.

Method for removing lice using conditioner (wet combing):

How is wet combing treatment done?

It can take up to an hour to do a wet combing session properly. It depends how long and how thick your hair is.

- Wash the hair in the normal way with ordinary shampoo.
- Rinse out the shampoo and put on lots of ordinary conditioner.
- Comb the hair with a normal comb to get rid of tangles.
- When the hair is untangled switch to the detection comb.
- Slot the teeth of the detection (nit) comb into the hair at the roots so it is touching the scalp.
- Draw the detection comb through to the tips of the hair.
- Make sure that all parts of the hair are combed by working around the head.
- Check the comb for lice after each stroke. A magnifying glass may help.
- If you see any lice, clean the comb by wiping it on a tissue, or rinse it before the next stroke.

After you have combed the whole head, rinse out the conditioner.

You need to do the above routine at least four times, with four days between each session. The number of sessions required depends on the last time you see lice:

The first combing session should remove all hatched head lice but **does not remove eggs**. Therefore lice that hatch from eggs after the first session may still be present.

Subsequent sessions clear newly hatched lice. Keep doing the combing sessions every four days until you have had three sessions where no lice are detected.

Once you have had three sessions where you do not see any lice, it usually means that you are then free of lice.