

## Head lice: the facts

- Most children will catch head lice at some time during their school days.
- Head lice cannot jump, swim or fly, and can only move from one head to another during close and persistent contact.
- Head lice feed on blood taken from the scalp.
- They've been with us throughout human evolution, and don't present any serious health hazard.
- Head lice often don't cause any discomfort. But secondary infection from germs entering the bite may lead to scratching after a month.
- They move very quickly through hair, making them difficult to find and remove.
- The first signs of head lice are usually their eggs (known as nits) found glued to hair strands.
- Female lice can lay up to 100 eggs during a life span of around 30 days.
- These eggs are laid close to the scalp, each glued to an individual hair.
- The further away from the scalp the eggs are found, the greater the time since they were laid.
- Hair grows at around a centimetre a month. Meaning that eggs found 5cm from the scalp may have been laid 5 months ago. So there's a chance that any head lice may have hatched and died some time ago.

Health professionals are aware of the dangers associated with applying insecticides to children's heads. Which is why they always stress that chemical lotions should never be used unless a live louse has been found.

The most successful natural alternative to chemical lotions is known as 'wet-combing'.

## Wet combing

Wet combing (also known as 'bug-busting') relies on the fact that head lice remain still when their breathing pore is blocked by moisture – making them far easier to catch and remove.

Careful and methodical combing with a fine-toothed 'nit-comb' when the hair is thoroughly wet hair removes the inactive lice.

But it may not remove the nits, which often remain firmly glued to the hair. Wet-combing needs to be done on three further occasions – four full days apart – to catch any lice which may have hatched since the last treatment.

## Wet combing with Botanicals

1. Wash the hair with Botanicals rosemary shampoo and then rinse.
2. Apply a liberal quantity of Botanicals rosemary conditioner. (As well as blocking their breathing holes, the conditioner makes it easier to spot lice when fine-combing.)
3. Comb through the hair using the large detangling comb.
4. Use the fine-tooth nit comb to thoroughly check for lice (see more detailed instructions on the right).
5. Rinse the hair in clean water and rub gently with a towel to remove excess water.
6. Spray hair with Botanicals 'leave in' herbal hair spritz.
7. Comb through again with wide-tooth comb to remove tangles.
8. Check again for lice using the nit comb.
9. The hair spritz can be used between shampoos.

## Using the nit comb

Checking the hair for lice needs to be done carefully and methodically. It can take between 15 and 30 minutes, depending on the length and type of hair.

Place the nit comb right up to the scalp, and then draw it through to the ends of the hair.

Check the comb after each stroke. Lice can be very small (at most 2-3mm) and may only appear as a dark spot in the conditioner, or on the teeth of the comb.

If anything is found, wipe it on a piece of white tissue or kitchen towel. It may be just a speck of dirt, so you might need a magnifying glass to check whether it really is a louse.

If you're not sure, sellotape it to a sheet of paper and ask your GP surgery (or school nurse) to check it.

Comb through in all directions until all the hair has been completely checked.

If any egg cases are found, these can be pulled off using finger nails. Alternatively, use a pair of nail scissors to snip off the hair.

Empty nit cases are soft and shrunken. Unhatched eggs will be hard and plump.

If any lice – or unhatched nits – are found, it's important to repeat the wet-combing process three further times, four days apart. This will ensure that any newly hatched lice are caught and removed before they can breed.

If any more lice or unhatched eggs are found during these subsequent checks, you will need to keep repeating the wet combing until the hair is completely clear on three separate sessions.

Finally, if live lice are found, all family members and any close friends should be checked. This helps prevent lice from being passed around yet again.

## A completely natural solution

The Botanicals head lice pack contains everything needed to remove head lice. But without any harmful insecticides or artificial chemicals.

Botanicals shampoo and conditioner contain rosemary and nettle – which have been used in herbal medicine for thousands of years.

Used alongside the wet-combing technique, our pack provides a completely natural, safe and effective way to get rid of head lice.



Botanicals body care products are 100% plant-based with no artificial additives, and are certified organic by the Soil Association. Our head lice pack contains rosemary and mint shampoo and conditioner, lavender and rosemary hair spritz, plus detangling and nit combs.



The Daily Mail was one of many national newspapers to highlight a recent French report linking head lice lotions to childhood leukaemia.

## Read our report

Recent studies show that insecticides used in popular head lice lotions can cause serious side effects. Scientists also know that head lice are developing high levels of immunity to these toxins. Taken together, this poses a serious threat to the health and well-being of our children. Many parents have decided to seek a natural alternative to chemical lotions. But do they work? Botanicals has sponsored an in-depth report comparing natural and chemical treatments. Read it on our website at [www.botanicals.co.uk/headlice](http://www.botanicals.co.uk/headlice).



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A natural remedy for head lice infections