

## Preventing Lice

However, you can help to prevent children from getting lice — or from becoming re-infested with lice — by taking the following precautions:

- Tell your child to try to avoid head-to-head contact at school (in gym, on the playground, or during sports) and while playing at home with other children. (Tie hair back).
- Tell children not to share combs, brushes, hats, scarves, bandanas, ribbons, hair ties or bands, towels, helmets, or other personal care items with anyone else, whether they may have lice or not.
- Every 3 or 4 days, examine members of your household who have had close contact with a person who has lice. Then, treat those who are found to have lice or nits close to the scalp.
- Be patient and follow the treatments and preventative tips as directed by your doctor for keeping the bugs at bay, and you'll be well on your way to keeping your family lice-free.

***Further information is available on a range of comprehensive websites. Just 'Google' the words 'head lice' and take your pick!***



**HARTSBOURNE PRIMARY  
SCHOOL**



[www.hartsbourne.herts.sch.uk](http://www.hartsbourne.herts.sch.uk)

## INFORMATION LEAFLET

Some parents have recently requested information about head lice and consequently we have put together a leaflet that may be useful for parents to refer to when dealing with this issue.

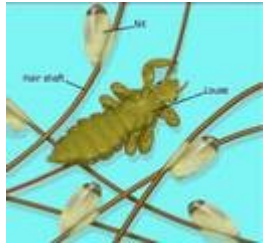
Head lice are a very common problem in families and it is NOT a sign of un-cleanliness or poor hygiene. They can be a problem for children of all ages and from all backgrounds, no matter how often they do—or don't—wash their hair.

**At Hartsbourne, all pupils with long hair are asked to tie it back in a plait, bun or ponytail.**

Lice aren't dangerous and they don't spread disease, but they ARE contagious and can be downright annoying. Their bites may cause a child's scalp to become itchy and persistent scratching may lead to skin irritation.

The bane of many parents, the head louse is a tiny, wingless parasite that lives among human hairs and feeds on extremely small amounts of blood from the scalp.

## Signs of Head Lice



Though very small, lice can be seen by the naked eye. What you or your doctor might see by thoroughly examining your child's head:

**Lice eggs (called nits).** These look like tiny yellow, tan, or brown dots before they hatch. After hatching, the remaining shell looks white or clear. Lice lay nits on hair shafts close to the skin's surface, where the temperature is perfect for keeping warm until they hatch.

Nits look a bit like dandruff, only they can't be removed by brushing or shaking them off. Unless the infestation is heavy, it's more common to see nits in a child's hair than it is to see live lice crawling on the scalp. Lice eggs hatch within 1 to 2 weeks after they're laid.

### Are Lice Contagious?

Lice are highly contagious and can spread quickly from person to person, especially in group settings (schools, clubs, parties, child-care, sleep-overs, summer-camps etc).

Though they can't fly or jump, these tiny parasites have specially adapted claws that allow them to crawl and cling firmly to hair. They spread mainly through head-to-head contact, but sharing clothing, bed linens, combs, brushes, and hats can also help pass them along. Children and teens are most prone to catching lice because they tend to have close physical contact with each other and often share personal items.

### Treatment

Your doctor may recommend a medicated shampoo, cream, or lotion to kill the lice. These may be over-the-counter or prescription medications, depending on what treatments have already been tried. It isn't uncommon for treatments to be unsuccessful because of incorrect use or because the lice may be resistant to the chemical in the shampoo.

It's important to follow the directions exactly because these products are insecticides. Applying them too much or too frequently can increase the risk of causing harm.

Some parents have had success with natural remedies such as mayonnaise or tea tree oil! Check out the internet for information about these remedies.