

# Once a week take a peek

The national parents campaign to beat school bug bullies

**AN EASY-TO-USE  
GUIDE FOR PARENTS  
TO FIGHT BACK  
AGAINST HEAD LICE**



Produced by:

**Hedrin**

In association with:

Medical Entomology Centre

# CHECK

You should check your children's hair regularly, ideally once a week – a good way to remember this is **ONCE A WEEK, TAKE A PEEK**



## How Do You Find Head Lice?

To diagnose a case of head lice you need to find them alive. This is when you need to use a treatment. They move fast and are small – so they can be hard to find!

## Sizing Up Head Lice

Head lice range in size from a full stop to a sesame seed.



Actual size in stages of growth.



### Where to Peek

- Close to the scalp
- Behind the ears
- The back of the neck
- The top of the head
- Under the fringe

### What to Peek for

- Adult lice are 2-4 mm long  
Immature lice are even smaller
- Live lice remain close to the scalp
- Nits are dead or empty egg shells - simply remove these by hand or by combing

## How to Check

- Checking for head lice shouldn't be considered a big deal, it is just a normal part of a family's personal hygiene routine like brushing teeth or washing hair
- It is best to check for head lice using a comb made for the purpose, ideally white so they can be easily seen and with teeth no more than 0.3mm apart in order to trap head lice
- Combing through the hair when wet, or after applying a conditioner, may make the process more comfortable
- Good lighting is important and so is comfort

### CHECK...

If head lice are spotted, take a close look at all the family, including yourself, and ask close family and friends to check as well

Consult a pharmacist for treatment advice

### Advertisement

The Hedrin Head Lice Detection Comb is ideal for effective checking.





# Head Lice – Together We Can Fight Them!

Head lice are a normal part of childhood - surveys among primary school children have found that nearly 1 in 10 have head lice at any one time.

If you're a parent you probably know what a hassle it is to treat head lice and just how frustrating it can be when your

child comes home scratching their head yet again. But parents, you've got the power to stop head lice in their tracks!

By following a simple three step process, Check-Treat-Complete, you can fight back against these bug bullies.

## The Impact of Lice

Anyone can get head lice although they are most common amongst children aged 4-11 who spend more time in close contact with friends and siblings. The best known symptom is itching but this is not the best indicator as many people may not itch with lice at all. Leaving lice untreated can lead to a loss of self esteem and confidence and a general feeling of being unwell.

### MYTH:

Only dirty children get head lice

### FACT:

Having head lice has nothing to do with personal hygiene

### NIT KNOWLEDGE:

1 in 4 parents believe schools check for lice -

**WRONG!**



# TREAT

If you find live lice, firstly, don't worry. Head lice are a normal part of life and are nothing to be embarrassed, panicked or ashamed about.

## How to get rid of head lice?

There are **FOUR** types of head lice treatment:

- Non-pesticide treatments
- Pesticide lotions and liquids
- Wet combing with conditioner
- Alternative treatments

**NON-PESTICIDE** treatments work in a different way from conventional pesticide treatments. They kill the lice by coating and either stripping away their waxy coating, causing them to dehydrate or blocking the opening to their air tubes, disrupting their ability to manage water. These physical mode of actions mean there is theoretically no chance for the lice to build up a resistance. There are three main active ingredients currently in use, dimeticone, isopropyl and activdiol.

**PESTICIDE** based treatments have been around for many years but there is now evidence that head lice already have, and continue to, develop resistance to some of them. There are two main types which work by poisoning the lice but evidence suggests that levels of resistance to these treatments are rising.

**WET COMBING** removes lice and nits but does take time and patience to ensure a thorough job is done. It's quite easy to miss a few and needs to be done twice a week for at least two weeks.

**ALTERNATIVE TREATMENTS** and herbal options are available – although their effectiveness varies.

Go to your local pharmacy for information and advice on which treatment is right for you.

## Applying treatment

- Treatment should only be applied if a living, moving louse is found – never 'just in case'
- When applying treatment, cover the full length of hair and ensure treatment is left on for the recommended time – following on-pack instructions carefully
- Keep lotion out of eyes and off the face – do not use the hair dryer and keep away from flames, stoves, cigarettes and other sources of heat





# COMPLETE

The treatment has been applied but there is one final step, it is time to repeat the checking process.

- Check your child's hair a couple of days after treatment to ensure that all the headlice have been killed
- If the pack instructions specify that a second application is required, repeat the treatment for a second time seven days after the first to kill lice that may have hatched from the eggs during that time
- Continue to check for head lice on a regular, weekly basis – **ONCE A WEEK, TAKE A PEEK**

## If the problem won't go away

If you still find live lice after you finish the treatment either it's failed or there has been a re-infestation. If the treatment failed you'll usually find lice of all life stages but a re-infestation will usually consist of a few adult lice. You'll need to treat again so make sure:

- You read the instructions carefully and follow them exactly
- You use enough treatment to cover the whole head and full length of hair
- You leave the treatment on for long enough
- You complete the treatment course
- If you're using a pesticide change to a different type of treatment
- You use a good quality comb if you're using the 'Bug Busting' method

To avoid inappropriate use of head lice treatments, it is worth considering whether there is in fact a true current infection. In some cases, an itchy scalp can be due to other skin problems such as eczema or other conditions such as dandruff can be mistaken for head lice. Care must be taken to accurately identify live lice and treatments should only be used when this is definitely the case. Speak to your healthcare professional if you are unsure.

## Your Home is a Nit Free Zone

Head lice do not live away from the head. There's no fear of lice spreading to clothes, furniture or bedding so excessive cleaning is not needed. If live lice are found on one member of your family, simply check everyone's hair and then treat as necessary.

## Should Your Child Stay Home?

If your children are checked for head lice on a weekly basis and treated straight away when live lice are found then they can attend school, child care and all other activities just as usual. But remind them to avoid head-to-head contact with other children until all the lice are gone.

Advertisement

## THERE IS A REASON WHY HEDRIN IS THE NO.1 SELLING HEAD LICE BRAND<sup>1</sup>



### Reassurance

**Hedrin 4% Lotion**  
The Original Hedrin product  
Contains dimeticone - always read the label



### Speed

**Hedrin Once**  
A fast acting solution that takes only 15 minutes to work



### Convenience

**Hedrin Treat & Go**  
A fuss-free solution great for children that just want to get out and play



### ALL HEDRIN BRANDED TREATMENTS:

- Are shown to be effective in clinical trials
- Have physical modes of action to which lice cannot develop resistance
- Do not require laborious combing in order to work
- Are skin-friendly
- Have no unpleasant odours and contain no known asthma triggers

# All it takes is three simple steps:

## CHECK

- Your child's hair once a week
- Use a proper detection comb to trap head lice, preferably white in colour so they can easily be seen
- If you find live lice, consult a pharmacist for treatment advice
- If head lice are spotted, take a close look at all the family, including yourself, and ask close family and friends to check as well

## TREAT

- Only treat if live lice are identified
- Use a clinically proven treatment, ideally with a physical mode of action to which lice are very unlikely to build up resistance
- Leave the treatment on for the recommended time for maximum effect – leaving it on for longer will not make it more effective

## COMPLETE

- Check that all head lice have gone within 2-3 days of the final application to complete the treatment
- If the pack instructions specify that a second application is required, repeat the treatment for a second time seven days after the first to kill any lice that may hatch from eggs during that time
- Continue to check for head lice on a regular, weekly basis

If you find live lice tell your school, friends and family straight away so they can check as well.



## What to do Next

*"We can fight the spread of head lice but we need to work together."*

- ✓ Ask your school to get involved with the 'Once a Week, Take a Peek' campaign
- ✓ Tell your friends and family about the campaign
- ✓ Go to the web site below for copies of this leaflet as well as further information and sources of help:

[www.onceaweektakeapeek.com](http://www.onceaweektakeapeek.com)

So just remember:  
**Once a Week,  
Take a Peek!**

**Hedrin**

Medical Entomology Centre



# Once a **Week** take a **peek**

The national campaign to beat school bug bullies

Schools and families can work together to fight head lice.

## SCHOOL CASE STUDY

Get your school to join the  
crusade against head lice  
by putting the *Once a Week,  
Take a Peek* campaign  
into practice.

Simply order **FREE** copies of leaflets and  
posters from the campaign website  
[www.onceaweektakeapeek.com](http://www.onceaweektakeapeek.com)  
and encourage parents in your local  
area to work together to beat  
head lice.



Sponsored by:



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## Head Lice – Together We Can Fight Them!

Head lice are a normal part of childhood and school life – in the UK it's estimated that around 8% of children have head lice at any one time.<sup>[1]</sup> The 'Once a Week, Take a Peek' campaign is aimed at educating parents about the need to check their children's hair regularly for lice as a normal part of their family's personal hygiene routine and then to take swift action should any be found. Although the emphasis is very much on parents taking responsibility and action, there is still a real and valuable role for schools to play in keeping head lice infestations to a minimum.

### Wootton Primary School Project - why not replicate in your school?

#### Objectives

A pilot project involving Wootton Primary school in Northampton was launched to put the Once a Week, Take a Peek concept to the test. It involved the school working in partnership with its parents to help:

- Increase awareness of the need to regularly check for head lice
- Create a sense of partnership between the school and its parents in the crusade against head lice
- Normalise the topic of head lice and decrease the sense of stigma associated with it



#### Logistics

The pilot campaign ran for a period of three months and involved:

- Announcements about the launch of the project and its progress being made to the parents via letters from the head, within the school newsletter and at parent evenings
- Once a Week, Take a Peek posters being put up around the school and the local community, including pharmacies
- Once a Week, Take a Peek leaflets being distributed to all parents
- School children being informed about the campaign to ensure they felt involved in the campaign
- Text alerts being sent by the school to the parents to help remind them to check for head lice 'once a week' and to inform them of an outbreak in their child's particular class (when reported by a fellow parent)





## School Text Alerts

Three quarters of the parents that took part in the 'Once a Week, Take a Peek in action' campaign at Wootton Primary School found the text messages sent out by the school - to help remind them to check for head lice once a week and to inform them of an outbreak in their child's particular class - very useful. Setting up a text alert system at your school could not be simpler - just follow these simple steps:

- The school sends out a letter informing parents that a text message system is being launched
- Parents who wish to receive the text alerts send back a slip providing their name, their mobile number, their child's name and the child's class number
- The school send out text message alerts to parents to inform them about an outbreak of head lice in their child's class
- The school send out text messages twice a term to remind parents to Once a Week, Take a Peek
- The text alerts can be sent out from a normal mobile phone (text messages can be purchased in bundles from service providers in order to keep the costs to a minimum)
- It is advisable to save the mobile numbers of the recipients into groups for each class in order to allow targeted messages to be sent following an outbreak
- The text messages should be clear and concise e.g. 'head lice found in your child's class - please take a peek at your family's hair and use an appropriate treatment if you find live lice' OR 'support the crusade against head lice by remembering to once a week, take a peek'



[1] Thomas DR et al. Arch Dis Child 2006;91:777-8



## Results

The project proved a huge success. Parents were surveyed before the start of the campaign and again at the end of the campaign and key results were as follows:

- 88%** felt better informed about head lice treatment and prevention as a result of the project
- 77%** believed outbreaks of lice had been reduced due to this initiative
- 74%** of parents now checked their children's hair at least once a week
- 80%** check their children's hair more regularly than before the campaign
- 77%** of parents now felt more confident about dealing with head lice
- Just **3%** still felt embarrassed if their child got head lice



## GILL NIGHTINGALE

Administration Manager at Wootton Primary School

*"Although schools no longer have 'nit nurses' or do termly checks, we do still have an important role in supporting parents in managing this problem. By working closely with parents and our pupils, the project has made a huge difference to the way in which head lice outbreaks are controlled."*

Once a  
**week**  
take a  
**peek**

For more information about the  
Once a Week, Take a Peek head lice campaign, visit

**[www.onceaweektakeapeek.com](http://www.onceaweektakeapeek.com)**

**The national campaign to beat school bug bullies**

Sponsored by:



Medical Entomology Centre  
Health Research & Innovation Network





# OUR WEEK AHEAD

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ideally once a week - a good way to remember this is -  
ONCE A WEEK, TAKE A PEEK

Once a  
**Week**  
take a  
**peek**

The national parents  
campaign to beat  
school bug bullies

Sunday

Saturday

Friday

Thursday

Wednesday

Tuesday

Monday

NAME

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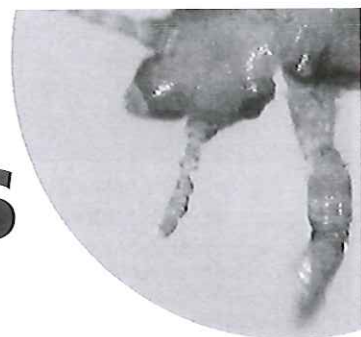
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Week commencing



# Beating head lice in four steps



Former school nurse **Christine Brown** offers four steps schools can take to win the fight against head lice this September

One in three children will get head lice at some point in the school year and although the emphasis is on parents taking responsibility and action, schools can still play an essential role in helping families to manage them effectively.

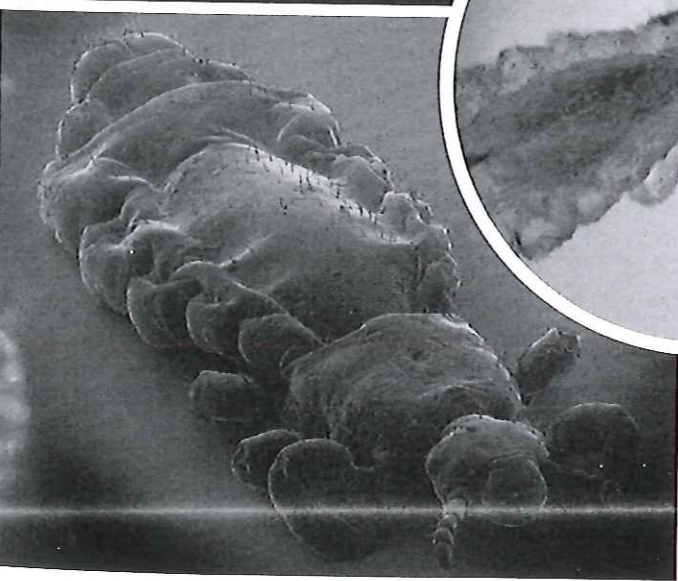
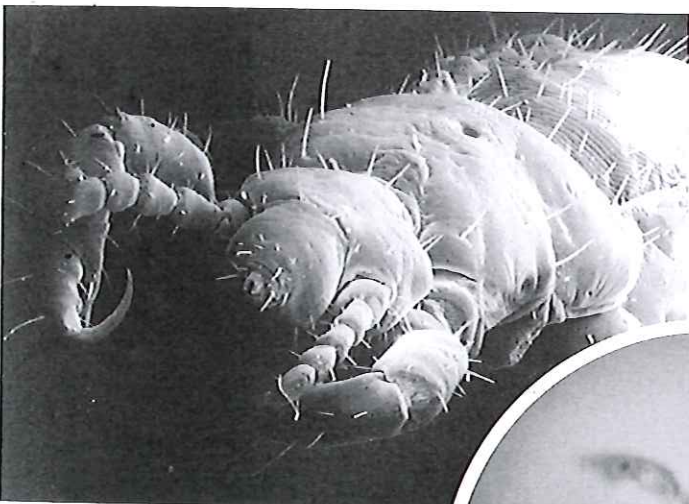
If not caught early and handled correctly, head lice can cause a great deal of frustration, upset and embarrassment for both parents and children.

However, a recent poll found that 46 per cent of parents did not understand the need to check for lice regularly, a third did not know what to look for, and one in four actually thought the school was checking for head lice on their behalf.

While responsibility to manage head lice lies with the parent, by implementing some simple steps schools can play a supportive role in the process, reducing the number of future outbreaks as well as the impact they can have on the family.

## Step 1: Understand the facts

Head lice are a completely normal part of childhood and, with the right methods, can be managed quickly and easily.



Ensuring teachers know the facts, and share them during discussion with parents, is the first step in dispelling myths and de-stigmatising the issue.

- Lice are wingless insects that hold onto the hair, feeding from the blood in the scalp. Nits are the empty egg cases left on the hair after lice have hatched.
- Adult lice can live for as long as a month with females laying several eggs a day.
- Lice spread when heads come into contact. Sleepovers, after-school activities, playing with friends and visiting family are the most common places for children to pick them up and pass them on.
- The best known symptom of head lice is itching, although only about 30 per cent are aware of it. It can be uncomfortable, can prevent sleep and concentration, and affect a child's social confidence.

## Step 2: Keep parents informed

If you are alerted to an outbreak in the school, informing parents to be extra vigilant and to take prompt action if they find lice can minimise the problem and limit the spread.

While some schools have adopted a rapid response text message system, sending a letter home and displaying posters at school reception are both effective methods during an outbreak. Details on where to order free posters for your school can be found below.

## Step 3: Educate and empower

There are a number of free resources available to schools to help empower parents with the information they need to manage head lice effectively.

Supported by the School and Public Health Nurses Association, the Medical Entomology Centre and head lice treatment Hedrin, the Once a Week, Take a Peek campaign was launched in 2008.

The campaign's aim is to raise awareness of the importance of being vigilant, making weekly checking as much a part of the family routine as the weekly shop, and taking swift action when dealing with head lice.

As well as a new Facebook page – set up to encourage parents to support each other when tackling head lice – the campaign provides free educational resources to schools. Visit the website to order free posters and parent advice leaflets.

## Step 4: Know where the experts are

Your community pharmacy is the best place to direct parents for one-to-one expert advice on head lice management. Pharmacists and specially trained counter-assistants can offer advice on the most effective treatments and the latest methods to protect against head lice infections.

Directing parents to the local pharmacies during induction, and including contact details on head lice literature, will demonstrate the additional support available and provide reassurance to worried parents.

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• *Christine Brown is a former school nurse and consultant to the Medical Entomology Centre.*

## Further information

[www.onceaweektakeapeek.com](http://www.onceaweektakeapeek.com)