

Parent Head Lice Checking Guide

A calm, practical guide to checking hair carefully and deciding what to do next.

What are you looking for?

Live head lice are small insects, up to around 3 mm long, and can be difficult to spot.

Eggs and nits may appear brown or white and are attached to the hair shaft.

Itching can happen, but itching alone does not confirm head lice. Finding live lice confirms an active infestation.

How to check

- Use good light and divide the hair into manageable sections.
- Use a fine-toothed detection comb and comb systematically from the roots to the ends.
- Check the whole scalp carefully, including behind the ears and around the nape of the neck.
- Wipe the comb on white tissue or rinse it between passes so anything found is easier to inspect.
- Check close household contacts too. If live lice are found, start appropriate treatment for affected people on the same day.

If you find live lice

Treatment can usually be managed at home. Wet combing is one option; medicated lotions or sprays may also be suitable. Follow product instructions carefully and ask a pharmacist if you are unsure which option is suitable.

School attendance

Children with head lice do not need to stay off school. Schools should communicate discreetly and avoid identifying affected children or families.

Photo checker

If you are unsure what you have found, HeadLiceChecker can provide an indicative photo-based assessment. A photo result is not a medical diagnosis and careful hair checking remains important.