

Head Lice: Myths and Facts

Clear answers for parents and carers.

Myth: head lice are caused by dirty hair

Fact: head lice are not caused by dirty hair. They spread mainly through head-to-head contact.

Myth: every itchy scalp means head lice

Fact: itching can have several causes. The only way to be sure someone has head lice is to find live lice.

Myth: children with head lice must stay home

Fact: children do not need to stay off school because of head lice.

Myth: the whole house needs a hot wash

Fact: the NHS says there is no need to wash laundry on a hot wash because of head lice.

Myth: one treatment session always finishes the job

Fact: wet combing follows a repeated schedule, and some medicated treatments also require a repeat application. Follow the relevant schedule or product instructions.

Myth: preventive medicated sprays are a good idea

Fact: the NHS advises against using medicated lotions and sprays to prevent head lice because they can irritate the scalp.