



Head Lice

A comprehensive tool for you to learn all about those dreaded head lice. If you require any further information, please don't hesitate to call on your local LiveLife pharmacy for fantastic advice on controlling and preventing this condition.

Let's learn something about head lice.....

- Head Lice are small wingless insects that are found on the human head, living on the hair and feeding by sucking blood from the scalp.
- They cannot fly or jump but have strong claws and will swing from head to head through close contact such as cuddling, playing or working closely together. They can only survive up to 48 hours away from a human host; this is because they need to regularly feed on human blood or they will die from dehydration.
- It is important to be aware they cannot live or breed on animals, clothes, toys, furniture, carpet, or bedding; they can only survive on the human head. There is a lot of misguided information about the nature of head lice and the types of treatments available for managing the problem. Head lice can be extremely frustrating for parents/carers as they are a very common occurrence amongst school aged children and they often have reoccurring problems. It is important to be aware that head lice are not related to poor hygiene and there is no preference for clean or dirty hair. They do not carry or transmit disease and have been around for thousands of years.

How do I know if someone has head lice?

When most people think of head lice, they immediately think of someone scratching their head as this is the obvious symptom. However, less than half of patients suffering with head lice will have an itch.

Other signs and symptoms to look out for include:

- Rash (which is caused by scratching),
- Presence of eggs (these look like white specks which are stuck to the hair near the scalp and do not fall out when shaken),
- Presence of lice on the scalp/hair,
- In some cases, patients may have an allergic reaction to the bites which can cause severe itching and become infected.
 - Please refer below on how to use the "Conditioner & Comb Method" so you are easily able to detect head lice - please see below:

Conditioner & Comb Method

The most effective method of detecting head lice is to use the conditioner & comb method. To do this you will need white conditioner, a normal comb, a fine tooth comb and white tissues.

1. Apply enough conditioner to dry hair to cover the scalp & hair from roots to tips.
2. Using the normal comb, detangle hair to distribute the conditioner evenly & divide into four sections.
3. Using the fine tooth comb, comb hair from roots to tips and wipe the comb on the tissue after each stroke to check for lice & eggs.
4. Continue process until the whole head had been checked and the majority of the conditioner is off the hair.
5. Ensure that all the tissues are placed in a plastic bag, tied up and put in the rubbish bin.
6. This process should be repeated weekly on all members of the family/household if infestation remains.

Treatment Options

What methods are available to treat head lice?

Regardless of the treatment used, the **only** way to eradicate head lice is by removing the lice and eggs (dead or alive). There are two methods of treatment that can be used, and it is important to note that there is no need to treat if lice or eggs are not present.

Conditioner & Comb Technique:

- As explained, this is the best way of detecting head lice but can also be used as a treatment. This is the safest option as it contains no chemicals and should be used especially if the patient has sensitive skin, is under 2 years of age, pregnant, breastfeeding, or has sores on the scalp. Note this method will not kill/remove eggs.
- This method is a cheaper alternative but should be repeated daily for 10 consecutive days until no live lice are found.

Insecticide products:

- These can be either synthetic or natural and are listed in the table below.
- Should not be used in children under 2 years of age or in pregnancy or breastfeeding. Care should also be taken for use in people who suffer from asthma, allergies or eczema (always check with your pharmacist).
- Where a parent/carer is pregnant or breastfeeding and they are treating their child, they must ensure that gloves are worn as the chemicals can still be absorbed through the skin.
- By examining the life cycle on the previous page, you can see that eggs hatch in around 7-10 days; therefore a second treatment should be applied 7-10 days after the initial treatment. You may ask why all of the eggs won't be dead already after the first treatment. It is important to inform them that even the most effective chemical treatments will not kill 100% of the eggs present!
- Please note that these products **should not** be repeated twice in a week even if the treatment does not work. Using a product too frequently can cause head lice to build up a resistance to the agent used and can also lead to toxicity (due to excess absorption of the product through the skin).

Please note:

Just because the product says it is natural, doesn't mean the person is not going to have an adverse reaction. Always test for irritation/allergy on the skin (perhaps using the back of your hand) before using any new product. This is especially important for those who have sensitive skin.

ACTIVE INGREDIENT	PRODUCT EXAMPLES
Pyrethrins (naturally derived insecticide from chrysanthemum flowers)	Banlice Pyrifoam
Synthetic Pyrethroids (work in a similar fashion to pyrethrins, but are synthetic rather than natural)	Orange Medic Paralice Quellada Pyrifoam
Organophosphates (pesticides)	KP24 foam and lotion HL7
Combination Products containing Herbal and Essential Oils	Wild Child All Natural Head Lice Treatment Ego Moov Head Lice Range Quit Nits Natural Head Lice Lice Blaster NeutraLice Range Tea Tree Thursday Plantation Head Lice Gel

Lifestyle Advice

How do I try and prevent head lice?

- Avoid head-to-head contact with other people.
- Keep long hair tied up in a plait, braid or bun and use mousse or gel in the hair.
- Never share hairbrushes, hats, hair accessories or pillowcases.
- Tea Tree oil solution can be mixed with water in a spray bottle and hair can be sprayed every day as a preventative (mix 1 part tea tree to 9 parts water in a spray bottle).

Is there anything else I should be doing when treating the family for head lice?

- Treat all members of the family/household where head lice have been detected and always perform a patch test before using a new product.
- Notify school/day-care so other parents can be alerted and check their child's hair.
- Rubbing vinegar through the hair can sometimes loosen eggs that are difficult to remove.
- Apply lotions and shampoos to dry hair. You may wet the fingers to help massage shampoos into the dry hair, but just ensure with any treatment all parts of the hair are covered.

If I am pregnant or breastfeeding, do I have to take any extra precautions?

- Pregnant or breastfeeding women should only use the conditioner & comb method. (In certain situations, the Pharmacist may recommend a Permethrin based product—always check with your Pharmacist).
- Pregnant or breastfeeding women should ensure gloves are worn if they are treating their child with any of the chemical based treatments.

What if my treatment didn't work?!

- If the manufacturer's directions have been followed & the treatment has not worked, the head lice may have built up a resistance to the agent. Ensure when trying a new product that it contains a different active ingredient—consult your pharmacist.
- Remember that re-infestation occurs very easily and it is not necessarily a sign that your product isn't working.

Head Lice Products

These popular products (among many others!) will be ranged and featured in our LiveLife Pharmacies and you can get any extra information you need from our friendly staff

KP24 Medicated Foam

KP24 is a chemical treatment containing Maldison (malathion) and is in the "organophosphate" family. It works by acting on the nervous system of the lice, causing paralysis and eventual death. It does have some activity against eggs; however, it is important to note it is not 100% effective; thus reiterating the importance of re-treatment after 7-10 days (as mentioned earlier in the module).

How do you use KP24 Medicated Foam?

1. Pour the foam onto dry hair, applying enough to thoroughly cover the scalp (usually 10-15mL is sufficient).
2. Massage the product into the scalp for approximately 5 minutes to form a rich lather; this will ensure good contact with the eggs.
3. The product should then be allowed to stay in the hair for 30 minutes.
4. Rinse the hair with warm water.
5. Remove all the eggs you can find after the treatment using an appropriate head lice comb (as pictured on page one of this module).

Important points to remember:

- Ensure you retreat after 7 days to kill any lice that have hatched since the first treatment!!
- Not to be used in pregnancy and babies under 6 months without consent from the pharmacist!

Other products to assist you:

- Fluoro nit comb for combing out the lice/eggs after treatment - These combs are our one of our most popular nit combs. They are cheap, light and simple to use and most of all, their bright colour allows clear, easy detection of the lice/eggs. Try one next time you need to treat those nasty head lice!
- A thick white conditioner to assist when using the "Conditioner & Comb Method" for future detection
- Self care fact cards available from the pharmacist
- Hair bands to assist in tying up long hair and hair spray/lacquer to hold back loose hairs (in order to prevent re-infestation).

Banlice Mousse

Banlice Mousse contains pyrethrins (the naturally derived insecticide from the chrysanthemum flower). This product has low toxicity, due to minimal system absorption and adverse effects are rare. The mousse formulation is easy to use, as it reduces the risk of drips and spills and is suitable for use from 2 years of age.

How do you use Banlice Mousse?

1. Shake the can and apply the mousse to DRY hair.
2. Massage the product into the hair and scalp for 2-3 minutes until thoroughly wet and leave in hair for 10 minutes.
3. Wash the hair thoroughly with warm water and normal shampoo.
4. Remove dead lice/eggs using a suitable nit comb.

Important points to remember:

- Treatment should be repeated after 7-10 days.
- Speak to the pharmacist if you are wanting to use this on any children under 2 years and pregnant/breastfeeding women.

Other products to assist you:

- Fluoro nit comb for combing out the lice/eggs after treatment
- A thick white conditioner to assist when using the "Conditioner & Comb Method" for future detection (perhaps the Ego Moov conditioner and comb)
- Self care fact cards are available from the pharmacist
- Hair bands to assist in tying up long hair and hair spray/lacquer to hold back loose hairs (in order to prevent re-infestation).

Ego Moov Head Lice Combing Conditioner

This product contains a combing conditioner with 2.5% Eucalyptus Oil, which is believed to improve the "stun" effect of conditioner on the lice. Marketed to assist with both detection of head lice and eggs and also for removal of the dead lice and eggs after hair has been treated, it is a very good companion product to use alongside another chemical treatments. It is pleasant smelling and can be used by the whole family for detection/control of head lice. It also comes with a bonus metal-toothed head lice removal comb, which is a big cost-saving!

How do you use Ego Moov Head Lice Combing Conditioner?

1. Apply a generous amount of the conditioner to wet/dry hair to ensure thorough saturation.
2. Massage the product into the hair and scalp for approximately 5 minutes.
3. Divide the hair into segments and use the "Conditioner & Comb Method" as described earlier in this pamphlet.
4. Continue combing until no eggs/lice are found.
5. Rinse product out of hair thoroughly with warm water.

Important points to remember:

- Consult with the pharmacist for infants under 6 months
- Ensure this product is used for inspection of lice/eggs on ALL family members, not just those with symptoms.
- Contains a nit comb, so no need to buy an additional one.

Other products to assist you:

- Self care fact cards available from the pharmacist
- Medicated chemical treatment (such as Banlice or KP24).
- Hair bands to assist in tying up long hair and hair spray/lacquer to hold back loose hairs (in order to prevent re-infestation).
- White tissues for the "Conditioner & Comb Method" that will be used with this product.

Ego Moov Head Lice Solution

This natural product contains eucalyptus oil and lemon tea tree oil to kill lice and eggs. It is the original head lice treatment from the Ego Moov range and has shown to be as effective as some chemical products in clinical trials. Please remember that although this product contains natural essential oils, it is still important to do a skin test. This formulation is designed to be used on normal scalps.

How do you use Ego Moov Head Lice Solution?

- 1. Apply the solution to dry hair as soon as possible after detection of head lice (ensuring sufficient product is used to saturate the hair).**
- 2. Massage well into the scalp and hair.**
- 3. Cover the hair, including the ear and nape of the neck with the cap provided in packaging and leave on for 10 minutes.**
- 4. Remove the cap and shampoo the hair as normal.**
- 5. Rinse the cap with soapy, warm water, then dry for re-use.**
- 6. Repeat this treatment again in 7 and 14 days after initial treatment (in order to effectively break the head lice cycle).**

Important points to remember:

- Ensure you cover the head, ears and nape of neck with the cap provided.**
- This treatment is different to most, as it needs to be repeated twice after initial application; at 7 and 14 days.**

Other products to assist you:

- Self care fact cards available from the pharmacist**
- Hair bands to assist in tying up long hair and hair spray/lacquer to hold back loose hairs (in order to prevent re-infestation).**
- White conditioner to use after treating for removal of lice using the "Conditioner & Comb Method."**