HEAD LICE...
HELPFUL QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

What are Head Lice? Head lice are tiny parasites which live on the human scalp and hair. They feed on blood several times a day and they cannot survive for more than 24 hours away from their host.

What are nits? Are they the same as head lice? Nits are not the same thing as head lice. They are the eggs that head lice lay. They are usually oval shaped and about the size of a grain of salt. They are fixed to the hair close to the scalp while head lice move around the scalp and hair.

Is a head lice infestation a sign of poor hygiene? No. Head lice are not fussy about cleanliness and are not an indication of cleanliness. All they want is a warm head and blood to feed on.

Can you catch head lice from birds and animals? No you can't catch head lice from birds and animals. They are “host specific”.

How long do head lice live? Head lice can only live for about 4 to 5 weeks. Since the females lay eggs everyday and the eggs hatch in 7 to 10 days it may seem like they live for a long time.

How can I tell if my child has head lice? The best way to tell is to do an inspection of the child’s head. You may see actual lice or tiny white specks stuck to the hair usually found near the scalp. Children often complain of an itchy scalp but sometimes there are no symptoms.

Are head lice contagious? Yes they spread easily from one person to the next person. This may be through direct contact (heads touching) or indirect contact (sharing a hat or brush). Head lice can crawl onto objects like hats and brushes but they cannot fly or jump.

What are the main types of head lice products available in Australia? There are both chemical pesticide products and chemical free products available on the market for treatment of head lice/nits. Head lice are developing resistance to some chemical products and they may not be as effective as they were in the past. NeutraLice is one brand of only a few natural products that have been clinically tested and proven to kill head lice and eggs. Resistance has not been reported to be a problem with essential oil products. Pesticide free products have a physical mode of action and kill lice by suffocating them. NeutraLice Advance is pesticide-free and is clinically proven to kill head lice and eggs. It is suitable for sensitive skin and young children over the age of 6 months.

Is the person with head lice the only one who needs treatment? All the members of the household should be carefully inspected and treated if head lice or nits are found. You should notify the parents of friends that your child has been contact in with, and the school, so that they are on the lookout for an outbreak.
How can eggs survive the treatment? *There is no treatment available that can kill 100% of the eggs. It can take up to 10 days for a nit to hatch. That is why more than one treatment is required to break the head lice cycle.*

Why do I need to treat my child three times? This is because no product can kill 100% of the nits in one application, it is important that you repeat the treatment at 7 and 14 days after the initial treatment to break the head lice cycle.

A typical child has 100,000 strands of hair for head lice to cling onto with their crab-like claws.

Why are NeutraLice Lotion, Spray and Advance Kits applied to dry hair? Head lice breathe through special spiracles. They react to soaking with water by shutting down these spiracles. Applying a head lice treatment to wet hair is not recommended as it may reduce the effectiveness of the product. In the clinical studies conducted on NeutraLice the treatment was applied to dry hair and the kill rate was almost 98%.

The products I have used in the past don’t seem to work, why? Head lice are developing resistance to some chemical products and they may not be as effective as they were in the past. Some of the natural essential oil products have not been clinically tested and proven to kill head lice.

What can I use to get rid of the nits (eggs)? Removal of nits (eggs) can be difficult as the nits are attached to the hair with a glue-like substance. Nits are difficult to comb out of the hair and don’t just fall out after a treatment. It is recommended that you use white conditioner and a ‘nit comb’ to comb the eggs out of the hair.

Do I have to purchase a special product for bedding, clothing and stuffed soft toys? No you don’t have to purchase a special product. Head lice cannot survive away from the human scalp as they feed on blood. Bedding and clothing should be washed in hot water and then dried in a hot dryer. Brushes and combs should be washed in boiling water. Any items that are not washable like stuffed soft toys should be put in the dryer on a hot cycle or alternatively they can be sealed in a plastic bag for a few days.

Is there any product that can prevent head lice? Even though there are some products on the market that claim to prevent head lice, there is no product that has been proven to prevent head lice.

Is there a product that can be used on a child with sensitive skin? NeutraLice Advance is clinically proven to kill head lice and is suitable for sensitive skin and young children over the age of 6 months. It has been proven to be very well tolerated in a clinical study.

What is the best way to comb the hair after using a treatment? While hair is still damp, start at the top of the head and lift a 2cm section of hair. Ensure the teeth of the comb are as deep into the hair as they can go and touching the scalp. Comb with a firm even motion away from the scalp to the end of the hair. Wipe nits completely from the comb with a tissue. Continue process with each section of hair.