

# Had a brush with nits? Switch to a comb

In line with NHS guidance on the treatment of head lice NHS Blackpool CCG will now only offer head lice combs as part of the Minor Ailment Scheme.

Wet combing is the most effective method of treatment for head lice.

Head lice combs come in different shapes and sizes but have finer teeth that are shaped to catch head lice and nits effectively.

## The Facts of lice...

- Head lice and 'nits' aren't the same thing – nits are the empty eggshells which remain in the hair after the lice have hatched.
- Itching isn't the first sign of having head lice – you should carry out detection combing regularly.
- A head lice comb can be used for detection as well as treatment.
- Insecticide shampoos deal with the lice but not the eggs. There's a good chance more lice will hatch after the treatment.
- There's no insecticide needed when you wet comb – that makes it safer for your kids, it's less hassle, easier to do and most importantly – **it works!**



# Getting to the nitty gritty

## Making the most of the comb.

Make sure you comb the hair thoroughly using the right technique. Here are some tips to help you.

1. Wash the hair with ordinary shampoo and apply plenty of conditioner.
2. Yes! The hair has to be wet. Dry lice will scurry away from the disturbance of the comb but they remain still when they are wet; giving you a better chance of catching them all in the teeth of the comb.
3. Use an ordinary, wide-toothed comb to straighten and untangle the hair.
4. Once the comb moves freely through the hair without dragging, switch to the head lice comb.
5. Make sure the teeth of the comb slot into the hair at the roots, with the edge of the teeth lightly touching the scalp.
6. Draw the comb down from the roots to the ends of the hair with every stroke, and check the comb for lice each time – remove lice by wiping the comb with tissue paper or rinsing it.
7. Work through the hair, section by section, so that the whole head of hair is combed through.
8. Do this at least twice to help ensure you haven't missed any areas, until no more lice are found.
9. Repeat the process five days later just to be sure.
10. Scan the QR code to watch a video from NHS Choices (or search *NHS Choices head lice video* online).



The Minor Ailments Scheme gives access to certain common medications without the need for a prescription. You will no longer be able to get the insecticide type treatments on the scheme although you will be able to purchase them if you wish to. For further information about treating head lice speak to your local pharmacist.