



**Beware of mixing your own potion for treatment or repelling lice** – it is unlikely to be effective and could be dangerous. In particular, essential oils, such as tea tree, must be used with extreme caution on children and pregnant or breastfeeding mothers. 'Natural' does not necessarily mean safe.



Seek advice from your school nurse, health visitor, pharmacist or doctor about which treatments are effective – not all those on the market are. In particular, there is no evidence that 'electronic zappers', tea tree oil or preparations that claim to contain insecticides of natural origin are effective.

You may find that your school or nursery no longer sends out letters to alert parents that a child in the school has head lice. There are a few reasons for this. Most schools and nurseries are likely to have a few children with head lice at any one time. On that basis, 'alert' letters could potentially be required every day. Alert letters also frequently lead parents to attempt to treat their children preventatively, which is neither effective nor advised. Head lice infection cannot be prevented, and over-use of insecticide treatments may lead to resistance.

Schools and nurseries should, though, provide helpful information for parents about the detection and treatment of head lice infection on a regular basis, for example at the start of a new term.

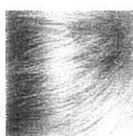
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This leaflet complements the Scottish Government's Health Department's national guidance for professionals, *Guidance on Managing Head Lice Infection in Children*.

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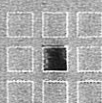
Head lice

Information for parents



## tips

Head louse eggs take up to 10 days to hatch. Baby lice take 6–14 days to become fully grown, and it is after this that they will take the opportunity to move from head to head during close contact. Younger lice tend to remain for a minimum of 6 days on the head where they have hatched.



Treatment is only needed when a thorough check detects live lice. Insecticide lotion, rinse, mousse or shampoo should never be used preventatively – doing this may help the lice to become resistant to treatment.