HOW TO SPOT HEAD LICE

- Check your child's hair. The most common places for head lice to lurk are in the hair behind your ears and at the nape of your neck.
- If you still can't spot any lice, comb the child's hair with a special 'nit comb'. These are available from most chemists. It's easier to spot the dark brown head lice as they fall out if you comb the hair over a piece of white paper.
- Now you need to treat your child. Head lice are tough – they can't be killed by washing with normal shampoo or normal combing. As they reproduce so quickly, you've got to kill them before they spread. If your child has head lice, check everyone in the family. You'll need to treat everyone affected to get rid of them.

THE WET COMBING TREATMENT

This is a method that avoids using chemicals.
- Wash your child's hair using a normal shampoo.
- Use plenty of ordinary conditioner to make the hair slippery so the lice will lose their grip.
- Comb your child's hair with a normal comb, then with a nit comb. Start at the root of the hair and go all the way along to the ends. Check the comb for lice after each stroke and clean it if any are there. Keep combing over the whole head for at least 30 minutes.
- Rinse their hair, and comb it through again.
- Do the whole thing again four times over the next two weeks. The rule is carry on until you haven’t seen any full-grown lice for three sessions.

CHEMICAL LOTIONS OR RINSES

- Only use these if you find a live head louse. There are two main types, insecticide-based treatments or dimeticone treatments. Your pharmacist will help you pick the right one.
- The instructions will be slightly different depending on which one you use, but normally you’ll need to repeat the treatment seven days later.
- Ask your chemist for advice if your child is under six months, if you’re pregnant or breastfeeding, or if your child has asthma or other allergies.
- Check for eggs three to five days after you use the lotion or rinse, and again after 10 to 15 days, in case any lice eggs have escaped. Don’t assume the chemicals will kill all the lice, as some may be resistant. If you think this is happening, go back to your pharmacist, health visitor, GP or school nurse for advice.
- You can also visit www.nittygritty.co.uk or www.nhs.uk/conditions/head-lice for more information.