

	NHS GREATER GLASGOW AND CLYDE BOARD INFECTION CONTROL COMMITTEE	Effective From	December 2025
	Head Lice Aide Memoire	Review Date	December 2027
		Version	1
The most up-to-date version of this document can be viewed at the following web page: www.nhsggc.scot/hospitals-services/services-a-to-z/infection-prevention-and-control			

Head Lice Aide Memoire

- Adult patients do not require to be isolated (a risk assessment may be undertaken for specific areas).
- Paediatric patient will require to be isolated until first application of treatment completed.
- Two applications of treatment should be applied 7 days apart, unless otherwise specified by the product manufacturer.
- Hairbrushes, combs and towels should not be shared. Personal combs and brushes should be discarded prior to treatment.
- Precautions required until first treatment completed.



Has the patient had the recommended applications of treatment and there are no signs of live Lice?

YES

NO

All precautions discontinued. If patient was isolated, isolation should be discontinued and terminal clean of room undertaken.

Pharmacist should be contacted if live lice present after two applications.

Head Lice Guidance

Hand Hygiene: Liquid Soap and Water or alcohol based hand rub.

PPE: Gloves and apron to be worn during the application of chemical treatment.

Patient Environment: Routine cleaning of room.

Patient Equipment: Routine cleaning of equipment. No sharing of towels, combs/brushes or hats Fine tooth comb should be single patient only and disposed of on completion of treatment.

Laundry: Treat as infected for duration of treatment.

Waste: Disposed of as Clinical / Healthcare waste.

Incubation Period: Eggs hatch 7-10 days after being laid.

Period of Infectivity: Whilst live lice are present.

Transmission Route: Contact

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Additional Information

<i>Clinical Condition</i>	<p>Patients can have an infestation by <i>Pediculus humanus capitis</i> (head louse) on hair, beards, moustaches, eyebrows and eyelashes. Head lice hatch from eggs and the sacs left behind are known as 'nits' which attach firmly to the hair shaft. Nits are more visible to the naked eye than live lice.</p> <p>The incubation period of eggs is 7-10 days and within 7 days of hatching, the nymph becomes a mature adult capable of reproducing. Adult lice can live up to 40 days on a head but do not live for more than 2 days if separated from the human body.</p>
<u>Symptoms</u>	<p>Symptoms include itching, a tickling feeling in hair, difficulty sleeping and sores on the head secondary to scratching.</p> <p>Itching from head lice infestations typically does not occur immediately. It takes 4-6 weeks for the host to develop sensitivity to the louse saliva, which then triggers the itching sensation. If someone has had head lice before, they are likely to develop itching much faster (within days) because their body is already sensitized.</p>
<u>Mode of Spread</u>	<p>They are spread by direct head-to-head contact or from indirect contact with items such as hats, towels or combs indirectly via and are a common problem particularly in children. Child care settings e.g. schools, nurseries are high risk areas for transmission.</p> <p>They can also spread.</p> <p>Head lice cannot jump or fly, and cannot be caught from animals.</p>