

## **Headlice – Detection combing guidance**

The only way to be certain that you or your child has head lice is to find a live louse. Spotting head lice in hair can be very difficult, so it's best to try to comb them out with a detection comb.

Detection combs are special fine-toothed plastic combs that you can buy from your local pharmacy, supermarket or online. A comb with flat-faced teeth and a tooth spacing of 0.2-0.3mm is best.

Detection combing can be carried out on dry or wet hair. Dry combing takes less time, but wet combing is more accurate because washing with conditioner stops head lice moving.

### **Wet detection combing**

To use the wet detection method:

Wash the hair with ordinary shampoo and apply plenty of conditioner.

Use an ordinary, wide-toothed comb to straighten and untangle the hair.

Once the comb moves freely through the hair without dragging, switch to the louse detection comb.

Make sure the teeth of the comb slot into the hair at the roots, with the edge of the teeth lightly touching the scalp.

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. Work through the hair, section by section, so that the whole head of hair is combed through.

Do this at least twice to help ensure you haven't missed any areas and continue until you find no more lice.

If you find head lice, you should check the rest of your family. Treat everyone found to have head lice on the same day.

### **Dry detection combing**

To use the dry detection method:

Use an ordinary, wide-toothed comb to straighten and untangle the hair.

Once the comb moves freely through the hair without dragging, switch to the louse detection comb.

Make sure the teeth of the comb slot into the hair at the roots, with the edge of the teeth lightly touching the scalp.

Draw the comb down from the crown to the ends of the hair with every stroke.

Look for lice as the comb is drawn through the hair. If you see a louse, trap it against the face of the comb with your thumb to stop it being repelled by static electricity.

Comb each section of hair three or four times before moving on to the next section, until the whole head has been combed through.

If you find head lice, you should check the rest of your family. Treat everyone found to have head lice on the same day.