

GOT THE ITCH?



Every barber faces this tiny adversary every now and then. MB looks into the best way of dealing with head lice...

The days of the Nit Nurse are long gone which helps make schools a literal breeding ground for head lice. Over 1.6 million head lice infestations occur every year in the UK among children aged 4 to 11 years, with a peak at the age of 7-8 years.* Once those school age kids bring head lice home, any human with hair on their head is fair game. By the time a client of any age is in your chair, it's essential to tackle things with tact - while you must stop the service there's lots of ways you can help bust some myths about lice and the ways to treat them. Expert Eileen Hutchinson runs NitNOT a specialist head lice removal clinic in Hemel Hempstead, she says "A female head louse is programmed to claw onto a new host's hair and at that moment does not think to ponder whether that hair is clean or dirty, or if the host is male or female. Beards are not entirely off their list either as head lice can quite happily set up there too. Our advice is to do a quick

check of every customer before you start the cut. Checking for eggs and empty eggs called nits, rather than live lice is the easiest way, as lice move quickly and hide easily. Sometimes dandruff is mistaken for nits. Dry dandruff is easily spotted as nits will never flake out. Wet dandruff can be rubbed off with a finger. It's only if it's a nit that the only way to remove it will be to slide it down and off the hair shaft."

If you do spot nits it does not mean a live infestation. Nits are white/cream in colour and about 2mm in length. They will be found near the scalp, behind ears and at the nape and crown of the head. It's best to ask the customer if they have treated their hair and when. Nits can stick to the hair for years after the infestation has gone! Eggs are harder to spot, especially in dark hair as they are brown or tan. Discreetly alerting customers (or their parent) about signs of an infestation is the best option and Eileen uses her own NitNOT Head Lice Treatment which is pesticide and solvent-free and on toxic giving shops and salons a treatment solution to offer clients.

**source NitNOT Thanks to NitNOT.com for the info.*

HEAD LICE MYTHS & FACTS

- LICE CANNOT JUMP OR FLY.
- FEMALE LICE LAY ABOUT 5 EGGS TWICE A DAY.
- THEY CAN REMAIN ALIVE OFF THE HOST FOR UP TO 48 HOURS.
- THEY CANNOT LIVE ON PETS.
- THEY CANNOT LIVE IN FURNITURE OR CARPETS.
- ADULT MEN CAN GET HEAD LICE.
- IT TAKES UP TO 10 HOURS TO SUFFOCATE A HEAD LOUSE.
- 'UPSTAIRS' LICE AND 'DOWNSTAIRS' LICE ARE NOT THE SAME LICE.

IMMEDIATE ACTION!

- STOP THE SERVICE.
- OFFER SUPPORT, ADVICE AND PRODUCT REFERRALS.
- WASH TOWELS OR GOWNS IN HOT WATER AND THEN QUARANTINE FOR UP TO 48 HOURS.
- WASH ALL TOOLS IN HOT WATER AND THEN DISINFECT AS USUAL FOR UP TO 48 HOURS.

Modern Barber

ISSUE 35 JAN-MARCH 2020 | £5 | WWW.MODERNBARBER.CO.UK

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