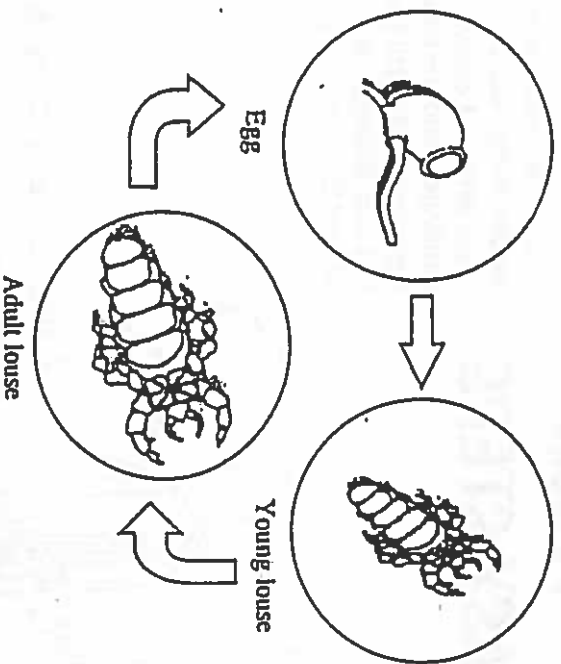


The Life Cycle of the Head Louse



Once the lice emerge from the egg the white egg cases are left behind in the hair. Should you find these after the wet-combing routine it may not mean that head lice are present as wet-combing only removes the head lice and not the egg cases.

CONTACT TRACING

If you find live lice in your hair then think who your family have had head to head contact with over the past week. Head lice cannot jump from head to head, they walk across the hair when heads are close together for several minutes and a warm bridge is made. It is important to tell people who have head to head contact with your family that you have found lice and they may have them too. Be tactful and pass on the information about Wet-Combing so they can

HEAD LICE

... the facts!

To be a good Lice-Hunter you need to have more facts about head lice to help stop some of the myths.

- ◆ Head Lice like clean heads so there is no need to feel dirty.
- ◆ Head Lice are wingless insects 2 - 3 mm long. They have three pairs of legs which help them to grip tightly. They are greyish brown in colour and very hard to find. They run and hide when dry hair is combed but on wet hair they lose their grip and can be combed out.
- ◆ Female lice lay several eggs every day. After hatching the empty egg cases stay stuck to the hair, turn white and move away from the scalp as the hair grows. These empty egg cases are called nits.
- ◆ Head Lice cannot jump from head to head. They need a nice, warm, cosy home close to your scalp. When two heads touch the hair between them must heat up to make a warm bridge before the lice can walk across. This takes some time.
- ◆ Contact tracing is very important. Tell all your head to head contacts
- ◆ Donors with whom the family have had head to head contact may be friends or relatives, so be kind when talking about head lice.
- ◆ To clear an infestation, repeat the lice hunting Wet-Combing method every three to four days until no live lice are found. This usually takes 14 days, lice hunting twice a week. The eggs take 7 to 10 days to hatch and the last lice, hatching on day 10, will be ready to comb off on day 14. Make sure you comb off all the lice when lice hunting.
- ◆ Always treat the whole family and close friends at the same time.

THE WET COMBING ROUTINE

How to Wet Comb

STEP 1. - Wash the hair with your usual shampoo, not a 2 in 1, rinse and apply plenty of hair conditioner.

STEP 2. - Leaning forward over the bath or basin comb through the hair with the conditioner still on to get rid of tangles. Now switch to a fine toothed detection comb and comb the hair section by section from the back of the head to the front, making sure all hair is combed from root to the ends. Inspect the comb between strokes and rinse away lice.

STEP 3. - Rinse the hair and sit up leaving the hair dripping wet.

STEP 4. - Now repeat the combing with the detection comb, this time from the front to the back of the head, section by section from roots to ends. Work gently over the whole scalp and inspect the comb for lice. Flush lice away and poke out any trapped between the teeth of the comb with a cocktail stick or nail brush. When every section of the hair has been thoroughly combed, dry the hair in the usual way and relax - Well done!

Continuing Treatment ³

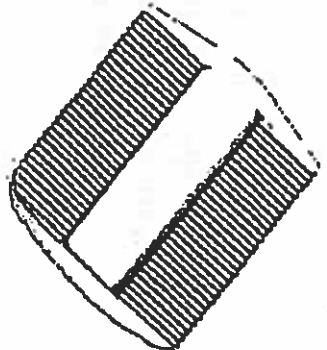
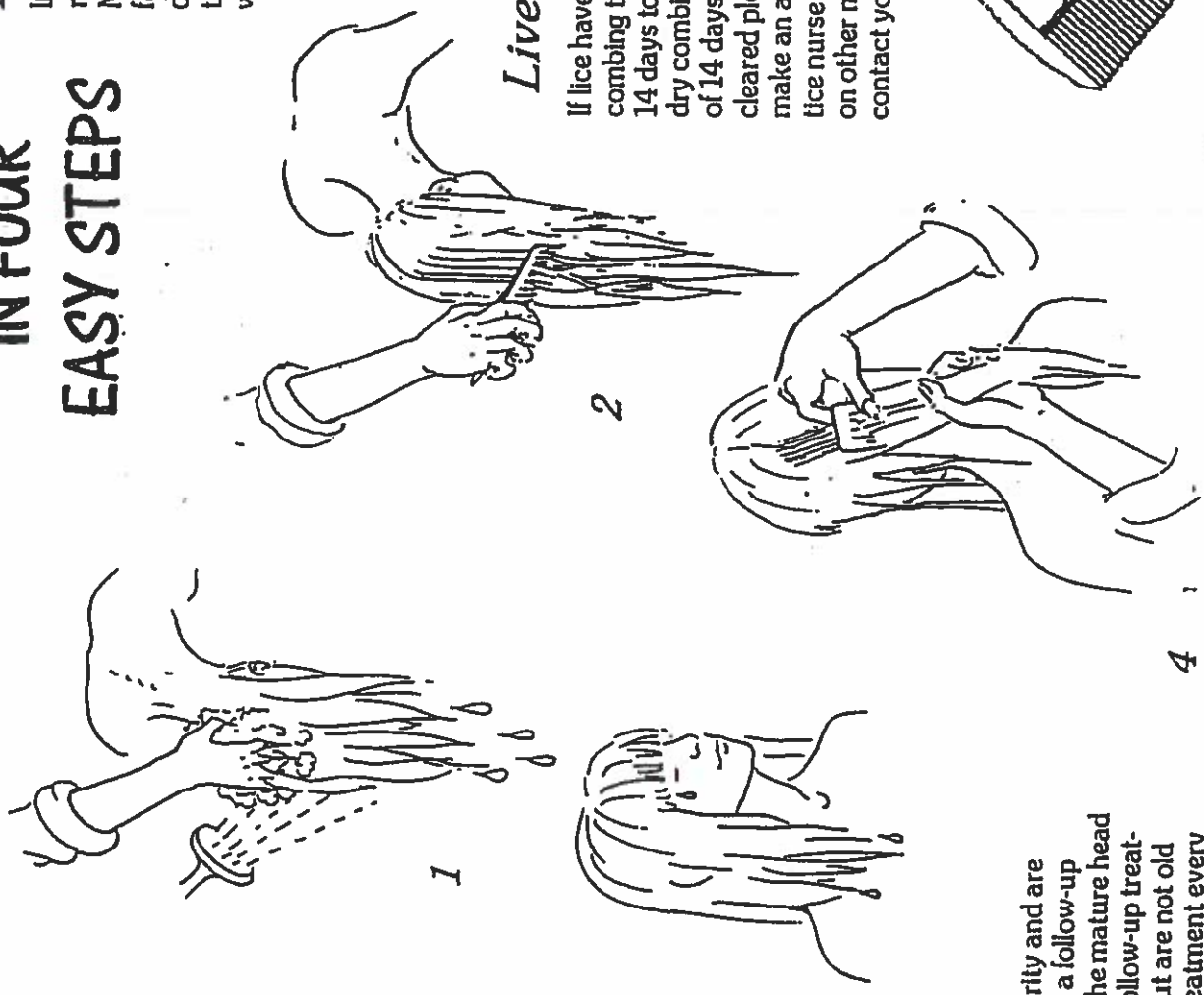
Because head lice take seven days to grow to maturity and are unable to lay eggs until then, it is important to have a follow-up treatment three days after the first wet-combing. The mature head lice will be removed in the first treatment and the follow-up treatment removes those lice which have hatched out but are not old enough to begin laying eggs. Continuation of the treatment every three days for a period of 14 days will get rid of the lice.

No Lice Found

If no lice are found repeat the routine in one week's time. Make sure that everyone in the family gets into the habit of daily dry combing of the hair, this can damage lice and they will not like living on your head.

Live Lice Found!

If lice have been found repeat the wet combing treatment every 3 days for 14 days to remove all lice. Continue dry combing every day. If by the end of 14 days the head lice have not been cleared please contact the surgery to make an appointment to see the practice nurse or health visitor for advice on other methods of treatment or, contact your pharmacist



The Detection Comb