



Minor Ailments Scheme Algorithms & Information Sheets

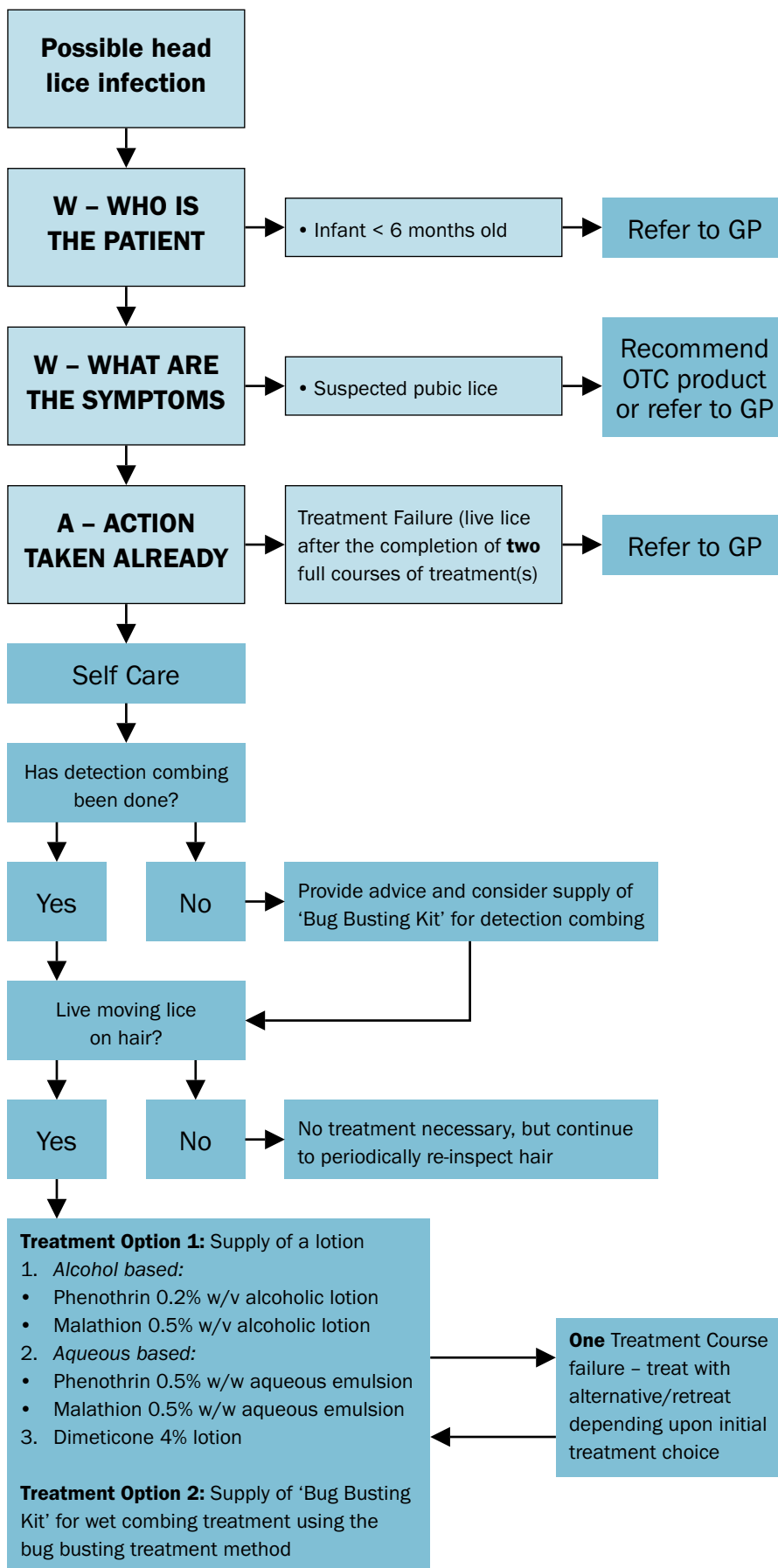
Head Lice

Diagnosis – Patient or Carer should be advised as follows:

- A live moving louse must be found to confirm head lice infection.
- Live lice can be found anywhere on the scalp. Hatched lice live close to the scalp unless approaching death, or if the host sweats (sweat drives them further out on the hair to avoid moisture).
- Nits are usually found above the ears and around the hairline. The presence of nits alone does not indicate active infection.
- Louse specimens can be attached onto sticky tape for checking by the pharmacist, since other objects found in the hair are often confused with head lice.
- Other signs of louse infection may include finding black specks e.g. lice droppings on pillows or collars.

Who else should be checked?

- All people in the same home (note – all people in same home with head lice should be treated at the same time and in the same way to prevent lice being passed around again).
- All close family contacts.
- All friends who have had head-to-head contact in the previous month.



Minor Alliment Condition HEADLICE	When to Refer	Advice for Self Care/Non Pharmaceutical Treatment	Drug	Treatment Options Formulary Items	Advice
<p>Head lice are small parasitic insects, grey/brown in colour. They live mainly on the scalp and neck hairs of their human host. They are pin-head sized when they hatch and less than match-head size when fully grown. Their presence does not suggest a lack of hygiene or sanitation practised by their host. Children are more frequently infected than adults.</p> <p>Head lice are acquired from other infected people, mainly by direct head-to-head contact. Lice and their empty egg sacs (<i>nits</i>) are <u>unable</u> to burrow into the scalp. They feed by biting and sucking blood through their host's scalp.</p> <p>The female louse lays on average 6 – 7 eggs a day, in small, dull coloured sacs, which are well camouflaged. These are securely glued to the hairs, close to the scalp, where the warmth will hatch them out in 7 – 10 days. Empty egg sacs are white and shiny and may be found further along the hair shaft as the hair grows out. Lice take 6 – 14 days to become fully grown, after which they are capable of reproduction. The average life span is about 32 days. Head lice need to maintain contact with a host to survive.</p> <p>Many people are asymptomatic. The presence of head lice may cause itching and loss of sleep. Itching can take up to 3 months to develop. The louse's saliva and faeces may sensitize people to their bites, thereby exacerbating irritation. There is an increased chance of secondary infection e.g. impetigo, due to excessive scratching.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pubic lice (If failure of OTC product) • Infants < 6 months • Treatment failure (2 full courses of treatment) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children with head lice should carry on going to school and not be excluded from school. • If a child has head lice a common sense approach is to tell the parents of their close friends to look out for lice in their children. • There is no good way of preventing head lice. Head lice repellent sprays do not work very well. • Detection combing of children's hair every week will detect lice infection early. • Use an anti-lice product only when the child has head lice. They should not be used to prevent head lice or "just in case". Frequent use may cause a build up of small amounts of the active medication in the body. The risk of harm from this is very small, but it is best to use these treatments only when infected. • Alcohol based lotions are flammable, so keep children away from fires, cigarettes, flames etc. when lotion is in their hair. • After treatment and the lice have gone, it may take 2 - 3 weeks for the itch to go fully. 	<p>1 Detection and treatment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Bug Busting Kit' <p>2 Chemical Alcoholic lotion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Malathion 0.5% w/v alcoholic lotion • Phenothrin 0.2% w/v alcoholic lotion <p>3 Chemical Aqueous lotions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Malathion 0.5% w/w aqueous emulsion • Phenothrin 0.5% w/w alcoholic lotion <p>4 Chemical-free lotion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dimeticone 4% lotion 	<p>Dose & Duration</p> <p>Comb One combing session every 4 days, for 4 sessions (over two weeks).</p> <p>All Lotions Rub into dry hair and scalp, allow hair to dry naturally, shampoo after 12 hours, and comb wet hair. Repeat after 7 days.</p>	<p>See <i>Additional information re: detection combing</i></p> <p>Chemical Alcoholic Lotions Avoid contact with eyes; do not use on broken or secondarily infected skin; do not use more than once for three consecutive weeks; alcoholic solution not recommended for head lice in children with severe eczema or asthma.</p> <p>Chemical Aqueous Lotions Avoid contact with eyes; do not use on broken or secondarily infected skin; do not use more than once for three consecutive weeks.</p> <p>Chemical-free lotions Avoid contact with eyes</p>