

Press release: Keep head lice treatments away from naked flame

Parents, caregivers and people with head lice are being reminded to always read product instructions before applying head lice removal products. Some of these products have the potential to ignite when in the presence of an open flame – such as when lighting cigarettes.

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) has issued a [Drug Safety Alert](#) advising pharmacists to tell people about the risk of fires when they discuss options to treat head lice.

With some head lice removal products easily accessible at supermarkets and without a pharmacist's guiding hand, users need to be aware of the importance of reading the instructions that come with all treatments to make sure they are used safely and correctly.

Speak with a pharmacist to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each treatment option. Alternatively see NHS Choices page on [Head lice and nits](#) and the [Head lice Clinical Knowledge Summary](#) from NICE for more information on options for eradication.

Dr Sarah Branch, Deputy Director of MHRA's Vigilance and Risk Management of Medicines (VRMM) Division said:

It's important parents and carers know always to keep away from a naked flame, including cigarettes, when using these head lice treatments. People can continue to use these head lice removal products safely – like all medical products, a simple check of the instructions will ensure safe, easy and effective use.

Patient safety is our highest priority and we encourage people to report any incidents involving head lice removal products to MHRA using our [Yellow Card Scheme](#).

Notes to Editor

- A range of products, which can include products like Hedrin, Full Marks, and Nyda, are used for the eradication of head lice infestations.
- 10 cases of serious burns associated with the use of head lice removal products have been reported to our Yellow Card Scheme since 2007.
- Some products for the removal of head lice can ignite when on the hair and cause serious harm in the presence of an open flame or other source of ignition such as when lighting cigarettes.
- Instructions for use should always be followed, including warnings to keep hair away from naked flame when using these products.
- Pharmacists are encouraged to help the person with head lice and/or their parents or caregivers to consider the advantages and disadvantages

of each treatment option (see NHS Choices page on [Head lice and nits](#) and the [Head lice Clinical Knowledge Summary](#) from NICE for more information on options for eradication).