

Treatment Options Comparison Chart

Treatment	Active Ingredient	Advantages	Disadvantages
Over-the-Counter			
NIX	Permethrin lotion 1%	Most studied and least toxic to humans. Generally effective and safe if used according to the manufacturer's directions. Does not cause allergic reactions in individuals with plant allergies. For use in children over 2 months of age.	Non-ovicidal; adverse effects include pruritis, erythema, and edema. Repeat treatments are often required or recommended by the manufacturer.
A-200, Pronto, R&C Rid, Triple X	Piperonyl butoxide (4%) Pyrethrum extract (equivalent to 0.33% pyrethrins)	Generally effective and safe if used according to the manufacturer's directions. For use in children over 2 years of age.	Non-ovicidal; avoid in people who are allergic to ragweed or chrysanthemums. Repeat treatments are often required or recommended by the manufacturer.
Prescription			
Ovide	Malathion lotion (5.5%)	Single application is adequate for most patients; partially-ovicidal. Malathion is approved for use in children over 6 years of age.	Due to isopropyl alcohol content, Ovide is potentially flammable; use caution. May cause skin irritation or stinging sensation.
Ulesfia lotion	Benzyl alcohol lotion (5%)	Not neurotoxic and kills head lice by asphyxiation. For use in children over 6 months of age.	Non-ovicidal; contains benzyl alcohol which may cause eye and scalp redness and irritation.
Sklice	Ivermectin lotion (0.5%)	May be both pediculocidal and ovicidal. Approved for use in children over 6 month of age.	Side effects may include eye redness or irritation, dandruff, dry skin, or burning sensation of the skin.
Natroba	Spinosad lotion (0.9%)	For use in children over 4 years of age.	Non-ovicidal; contains benzyl alcohol which may cause eye and scalp redness and irritation.

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Alternative or Natural			
Petroleum jelly (Vaseline)	Viscous material which potentially asphyxiates head lice.	“Non-chemical”; perceived as a natural option.	Effectiveness unknown; very difficult to remove from hair.
Mayonnaise	Viscous material which potentially asphyxiates head lice.	“Non-chemical”; perceived as a natural option.	Effectiveness unknown; very difficult to remove from hair.
Oil (vegetable, olive, mineral)	Viscous material which potentially asphyxiates head lice.	“Non-chemical”; perceived as a natural option.	Effectiveness unknown; very difficult to remove from hair.
Cetaphil®	Viscous material which potentially asphyxiates head lice.	“Non-chemical”; perceived as a natural option.	Not approved by the FDA for use as a pediculicide.
Desiccation (Heat)	Controlled, heated air causes desiccation in head lice and eggs.	“Non-chemical”; perceived as a natural option. Ovicidal; one time treatment usually effective.	Expensive equipment; individual providing treatment must be trained and competent.
Enzyme Products		“Non-chemical”; perceived as a natural option.	Effectiveness unknown

Note: The use of brand names in this document is for identification purposes only, not for product endorsement.

Treatment should never consist of toxic and/or flammable household products such as:

- Kerosene
- Gasoline
- Paint thinner
- Turpentine
- Any household cleaner



Pesticides intended for use on insects or bugs other than head lice, or pesticides intended for use on animals, should never be used on humans.

Every year children are seriously injured as a result of these types of products

Caution!
Do not put small children to bed wearing plastic, or a shower cap due to the risk of suffocation.