

Step-by-Step Chemical Treatment

Step 1: Confirm Active Infestation

- Look for **live, moving lice**, not just nits.

Nits alone do not indicate an active infestation. Treating without live lice can lead to unnecessary chemical exposure and contributes to resistance.

Step 2: Initiate First-Line Treatment

Use one of the following:

- **Permethrin 1% lotion**
- **Pyrethrins with piperonyl butoxide**

Instructions:

- Apply as directed to clean hair
- Leave on for the recommended time
- Rinse thoroughly

These agents are recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) as first-line treatments due to their safety, accessibility, and effectiveness. They target the nervous system of lice, leading to paralysis and death.

Step 3: Repeat Treatment in 9–10 Days

- Reapply treatment even if lice are not seen, or sooner if live lice persist.

Eggs may survive the first treatment. The second application ensures that newly hatched lice are killed before they can reproduce, breaking the life cycle.

Step 4: Escalate Treatment if Needed (Badger Care covers, Call MD)

If lice persist after proper use of first-line therapy, consider:

- **Ivermectin 0.5% lotion**
- **Spinosad 0.9% suspension**
- **Malathion 0.5% lotion**

Resistance to permethrin and pyrethrins has been reported. These alternative agents have different mechanisms of action, making them effective when first-line treatments fail.