

LICE

Pharmacy Assessment Protocol

ELIGIBILITY FOR SERVICE

Anyone with the following symptoms and/or circumstances are eligible for pharmacy prescribing of prescription lice treatment:

- Confirmed lice infestation of the head/scalp

Those presenting with the following symptoms and/or circumstances should be referred for further medical evaluation.

- Age <2 months
- Other chronic skin conditions causing irritation and weakened skin barrier (Ex. scalp psoriasis)
- Involvement of eyes or mucosal membranes.
- Pubic/body lice
- Treatment failure after 2 attempts

PRESCRIBING

*MAX 2 treatments with the same medication, if not successful due to resistance concern.

First-Line: *Each over-the-counter product approved by the FDA for the treatment of lice contains one of the following active ingredients (CDC)			
<u>Medication</u>	<u>Directions</u>	<u>Duration</u>	<u>Notes</u>
Pyrethrins combined with Piperonyl Butoxide (Brand names: A-200, Pronto, R&C, Rid, and TripleX) - OTC	Apply to dry hair for 10 minutes, then rinse or shampoo followed by combing. *See back of box for brand specific directions	Repeated in 9-10 days to kill any remaining nits that have hatchedNo more than 2 applications in 24 hours	Approved for use on children 2 years of age and older Avoid use for people allergic to chrysanthemums or ragweed. Pyrethrins can only kill live lice, not unhatched eggs (nits).
Permethrin Lotion, 1% (Brand name: Nix) OTC	Apply to wet hair (non-conditioned, leave on for 10 minutes, rinse, comb hair to remove lice. *See back of box for brand specific directions	Retreat in 9-10 days only if active lice found	Approved for use on children 2 months of age and older Permethrin can only kill live lice, not unhatched eggs (nits).

Second Line: Consider in patients who have failed appropriate first-line therapy or if permethrin or pyrethrin resistance			
<u>Medication</u>	<u>Directions</u>	<u>Duration</u>	<u>Notes:</u>
Benzyl alcohol lotion 5%	Apply sufficient lotion to dry hair to completely saturate the scalp and hair; leave on for 10 minutes; then rinse off thoroughly with water	Repeat treatment after 7 days	Approved for use on children 6 months or older Safety over 60 years old is unknown
Ivermectin Lotion 0.5%	Apply up to 1 tube topically to dry hair, coating hair and scalp thoroughly; rinse with water after 10 minutes.	Once, may repeat	Age >6 months
Malathion lotion 0.5%	Apply small amount to dry hair, enough to wet the hair and scalp. Allow hair to dry naturally . After 8-12 hours, shampoo and rinse hair, then comb hair with a fine comb to remove lice.	Once, may repeat treatment if lice are still present after 7-9 days	Age >6 years
Spinosad 0.9% topical suspension	Apply enough suspension to cover dry scalp, then apply to dry hair; leave on for 10 minutes; rinse off thoroughly with warm water.	Repeat application if live lice are present 7 days after initial treatment.	Age > 6 months
Alternative: Last line due to contraindications, reserve for treatment failures or those who cannot tolerate other first lines.			
<u>Medication</u>	<u>Directions</u>	<u>Duration</u>	<u>Notes:</u>
Lindane shampoo 1%	Apply shampoo to dry hair, giving special attention to find hairs along neck; leave on for 4 minutes, then add small amounts to water until a lather forms, then rinse immediately; most patients only need 1 ounce, do not use more than 2 ounces	Do not use this medication twice.	Contraindications: premature infants, HIV, seizure disorder, pregnancy/breast-feeding, children, elderly, weight <110 lbs.

FOLLOW-UP

The patient should be instructed to contact the pharmacy if they experience a severe reaction or still has live lice after the first treatment. If a prescription is provided and the patient has a primary care provider identified, the pharmacy will notify the provider within 3 business days following the patient's encounter.

Nolt D, Moore S, Yan AC, Melnick L; Committee on Infectious Diseases; Committee on Practice and Ambulatory Medicine; Pediatrics. 2022

Clinical Resource, Management of Head Lice. Pharmacist's Letter/Prescriber's Letter. December 2022.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Clinical care of head lice [Internet]. Atlanta (GA): Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; 2025

Gunning K, Kiraly B, Pippitt K. Lice and Scabies: Treatment Update. Am Fam Physician. 2022