

**POMONA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
HEALTH SERVICES & PROGRAMS
Treatments For Head Lice – Health Services Staff**

Pediculicides: Chemicals used to kill head lice.

Pyrethrins and permethrins are the most commonly used pediculicides sold over-the-counter. Both of these chemicals kill live lice but treatment may need to be repeated to kill resistant or newly hatched lice. Malathion is a chemical that has been approved by the FDA for use as a pediculicide called Ovide (available by prescription only). Ovide is recommended for resistant cases of head lice.

1. **Pyrethrins:** Brand Names - **RID, CLEAR, A-200, Pronto, R&C**

- Neurotoxic (toxic to nervous system) to lice but have extremely low toxicity to humans,
- Applied to **dry** hair and **left on the hair for 10 minutes** before rinsing out with **cool** water.
- Rinse hair over a sink, rather than in the shower or bathtub, to limit exposure of skin surface to the pediculicide.
- Newly laid eggs do not have a nervous system and therefore are not affected by neurotoxic chemicals. This necessitates a second treatment 7-10 days later to kill newly emerged nymphs hatched from eggs that survived the first treatment.

2. **Permethrin** (1%): Brand Name – **Nix**

- Neurotoxic to lice with low toxicity to humans due to low absorption rate through skin.
- Apply Nix cream rinse **after** hair has been shampooed with a non-conditioning shampoo (i.e. plain shampoo product), rinsed and towel dried.
- Leave Nix on hair for 10 minutes and then rinse off.
- If live lice are seen in 7-10 days after first treatment, a second application is recommended.

3. **Malathion (0.5%):** Brand Name – **Ovide**

- Available by prescription only.
- California Department of Health Services recommends use of Ovide after two treatments with over-the-counter products have not worked. Parents should be encouraged to talk with their doctor about a prescription for Ovide.
- Ovide is available to Medi-Cal recipients.
- Apply OVIDE Lotion on the scalp hair in an amount just sufficient to thoroughly wet hair and scalp.
- Allow hair to dry naturally and to remain uncovered. Shampoo hair after 8 to 12 hours. Rinse well and comb out remaining nits.
- If lice are still present after 7 - 9 days, repeat with a second application of OVIDE Lotion

Chemical treatments are more effective when combined with manual removal of nits (eggs) that the female head louse lays in hair shafts of a human host. Combing and removal of nits may help to reduce the duration of a head lice infestation.

Removing all nits after treatment with a pediculicide is not critical to preventing the spread of head lice. Only live lice can cause an infestation. However, pediculicides are **not** 100% effective in killing all nits (eggs) and therefore manual removal of nits, especially those within 1/2 inch of the scalp, after treatment with any of the above products is recommended.

SECTION 6