

drug of choice for infants and children is permethrin 1% cream rinse (Nix), which kills adult lice and nits ([Frankowski, Weiner, and American Academy of Pediatrics Committee on School Health, 2010](#)). This product and preparations of pyrethrin with piperonyl butoxide (RID or A-200 Pyrinax) can be obtained without a prescription and are more effective and safer than lindane. Most experts advise a second treatment at 7 to 10 days to ensure a cure ([American Academy of Pediatrics, 2015](#)). However, pyrethrin products are contraindicated for individuals with contact allergy to ragweed or chrysanthemums. If neither permethrin nor pyrethrin products are effective, the prescription drug 0.5% malathion topical (Ovide), which has been approved for treatment of head lice, can be used. However, malathion topical contains flammable alcohol, must remain in contact with the scalp for 8 to 12 hours, and is not recommended for children younger than 2 years old. Benzyl alcohol 5% lotion has been approved by the US Food and Drug Administration for the treatment of head lice in children as young as 6 months old; it should be applied to dry hair, saturated, and rinsed off after 10 minutes. Because benzyl alcohol 5% is not an ovicidal agent, it should be repeated in 7 days ([Haisley-Royster, 2011](#)).

Ivermectin lotion 0.5% may be used in children 6 months old and older; the lotion is applied only once to dry hair and left for 10 minutes before rinsing. Oral Ivermectin may be given 9 to 10 days apart, but because of neurotoxicity, it should not be used to treat children weighing less than 15 kg (33 lbs.) ([American Academy of Pediatrics, 2015](#)).

Because of concerns that head lice may be developing resistance to chemical shampoos and that repeated exposure of children to strong chemicals on the scalp may be unwise, effective nonchemical control measures are essential. Daily removal of nits from a child's hair with a metal nit or flea comb is an essential control measure following treatment with the pediculicide. The child's entire head should be completely combed every day until no more nits are found. In most instances, a nit comb removes most of the nits. However, in some instances, nits need to be removed by scraping them off strands of hair with the fingernail or using tweezers. Several varieties of nit combs are currently available at community pharmacies.