

[Open Peer Review on Qeios](#)

# Malathion

National Cancer Institute

## Source

National Cancer Institute. *Malathion*. NCI Thesaurus. Code C47593.

A synthetic phosphorous compound and cholinesterase inhibitor that is strictly used as a topical pediculicide. Malathion exerts its action on the nervous system of the lice by irreversibly inhibiting the activity of cholinesterase, thereby allowing acetylcholine to accumulate at cholinergic synapses and enhancing cholinergic receptor stimulation. This eventually leads to the head lice's death.