



Eye drops and eye ointment

patient information

INTRODUCTION

This brochure provides information on how to use eye drops or eye ointment. It includes a medication schedule and guidelines on the use of eye drops.

You will have visited the ophthalmologist or have had eye surgery, which is why you were given a prescription for eye drops or eye ointment. You will have been prescribed this medication because you are suffering from an eye condition, e.g. glaucoma, or because you need to prevent or cure an eye infection. Apply the eye drops or eye ointment until your next check-up with the ophthalmologist, or for as long as prescribed by the ophthalmologist.

ASPECTS TO REMEMBER

Read the leaflet, which will tell you how to store the medication and which side effects may occur. If you cannot read the small print in the leaflet, you can ask your pharmacist for a print-out with large format print.

Keep an eye on the use by date and make a note of the date on which you opened the medication on the label on the bottle or tube. This will enable you to check whether the medication is still safe to use. Eye drops and eye ointment can normally be used until one month after opening the packaging. Further information on the use by date is normally stated on the packaging or you can ask your pharmacist.

CONTACT LENSES

Are you using eye drops?

Apply the drops in the morning before inserting your lenses and/or in the evening when you have removed your lenses. Do you need to apply drops more than twice a day? If so, remove your lenses before applying the eye drops. Hard lenses can be inserted again immediately after applying the drops. Soft lenses need to be inserted thirty minutes after applying the drops, as they could be damaged by the preservative in the eye drops.

Are you using an eye ointment?

If so, do not use contact lenses for a period of eight hours.

DOSAGE AND TIMING

- **Are you using several types of eye drops?**
Always wait at least five minutes between the application of different drops.
- **Are you using both eye drops and eye ointment?**
If so, apply the eye drops first and wait for five minutes before applying the ointment.
- Eye drops are most effective if you apply a single drop (no more) each time. You can practise this on a paper tissue to find out how much pressure you need to apply.
- **Are you using the same eye drops or eye ointment more than twice a day?**
Try to spread the timing of the applications throughout the day whenever possible, between getting up and going to bed.
- **Are you using eye drops twice a day?**
Allow twelve hours between applications.
- Use this table as an aide memoire to ensure that you apply all the medication at the right time and in the correct dose.

EYE DROP INSTRUCTIONS

If you apply the eye drops yourself, follow these steps:



- 1 Wash your hands with soap and dry them thoroughly.



- 2 Sit up straight. Hold the eye drop bottle as if you were holding a pen.



- 3 Using the tops of your fingers on the opposite hand, pull down the lower eyelid to create a duct. However, you should not pull down the eyelid following surgery on the eyelid or eye socket. In that case apply the drops or ointment by pulling down the eyelid that was not operated on.



- 4 Bend your head backwards and look up with both eyes. If you find it difficult to bend your head backwards, lie down.



- 5 Place your hand holding the bottle on the hand creating the duct. Lift the bottle over your eye but do not touch the eye, eyelids or eyelashes with the bottle.



- 6 Squeeze the bottle and apply a single drop to the duct. Close your eye (but don't squeeze). You can now straighten your head again and sit up straight.

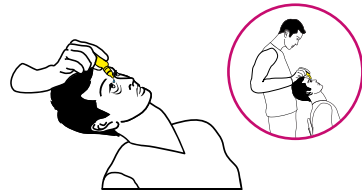
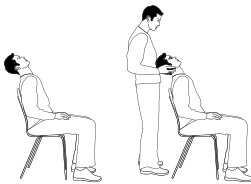


7 Close your tear duct for at least one minute, by gently applying pressure just below the small hard nodule in the inner corner of your eye (near the nose), in order to prevent side effects.

8 Wash your hands with soap and dry them. Now reseat the eye drop bottle. It is normal for your vision to briefly be slightly hazy after the application of eye drops or ointment.

APPLYING DROPS FOR SOMEONE ELSE

If you are applying drops for someone else the procedure is more or less the same. Additional instructions:



1 Ask the patient to sit down and stand behind them. Ask the patient to bend their head backwards and look up with both eyes. They can rest their head against your abdomen.

2 Rest your hands on the patient's temple, forehead or nose and hold the bottle over the eye, but do not touch the eye, eyelids or eyelashes with the bottle.



- 3 Ask the patient to create a duct by pulling the lower eyelid down with their index finger. This can also be done using the thumb. However, you should not pull down the eyelid following surgery on the eyelid or eye socket. In that case apply the drops or ointment by pulling down the eyelid that was not operated on.



- 4 Squeeze the bottle and apply a single drop to the duct. The patient needs to put pressure on the tear duct for one minute and can then lift their head again.

ADDITIONAL AIDS

If you find it difficult to apply eye drops you can ask your pharmacist, home care organisation or ophthalmologist for advice. They can also provide information on potential eye drop techniques and aids. The type of aid is dependent on the type of eye drop bottle you are using and the specific problem you may be experiencing when applying eye drops or ointment.

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