

PATIENT INFORMATION

Atropine for amblyopia

What are atropine drops?

Atropine drops are used to dilate (enlarge) the pupil of the eye and *temporarily* stop the eye from focussing.

Why does my child need atropine drops?

Your child has amblyopia (lazy eye). Atropine drops are used as an alternative to patching the eye to increase the vision in the amblyopic eye.

How do the drops work?

Drops are put into the eye with the better vision to temporarily stop it from focussing; this encourages the use of the 'lazy eye', therefore improving the vision.

Using the drops – instillation

- Wash your hands before and after using the drops. The drops should ideally be inserted in the morning to have the greatest effect.
- Gently pull down your child's lower lid and place one drop in the space between the lower lid and the eye, ensuring the dropper does not touch the eye. Then close the eye and gently press against the inner corner of the eye for at least one minute (punctal occlusion).
- Make sure to wipe away any excess atropine drop from your child's face once the drop has been inserted. Wash your child's hands to avoid them swallowing any of the eye drop if they rub their eyes.

How do I store the eye drops?

The drops should be kept at room temperature and must be kept out of reach of all children.

The drops should be used within expiration date stated on packaging; do not use after they have expired.

Any used or leftover drops should be brought back to the orthoptic department to be safely disposed of.

Atropine is poisonous if taken by mouth – *it is very important that you store the atropine safely and securely.*

One drop is to be inserted in the eye, on Saturday and Sunday mornings.

How long does the atropine effect last?

The effects of blurred vision can last for one week after the last instillation. The pupil can stay dilated for up to two weeks.

Appointments

Children undergoing atropine therapy are regularly reviewed (usually every 1 to 2 months). This is so we can give you an idea of how your child's vision is improving, give repeat prescription if needed and ensure that we are not using drops for longer than necessary.

Are there any side effects?

Your child may be more sensitive to light whilst using the drops, so it may be advisable to encourage them to wear a hat or sunglasses. It is advisable to inform your child's school, if applicable, that they are undergoing atropine treatment.

A very small percentage of children may be sensitive to the drops and have one of the following reactions:

- Flushing of the skin
- Dryness of the mouth/skin
- Change in heart rate
- Giddiness/vomiting
- Itchy or swollen eyelids
- Fever
- Restlessness /irritability/ hyperactivity
- Constipation

If your child is experiencing any of these symptoms, stop use and seek medical attention. Atropine should not be used if your child is suffering from a high fever.

If your child has a squint/turn in the lazy eye you may notice that the squint/turn swaps eyes. This is nothing to worry about as the previously 'squinting eye' is being encouraged to work to improve the vision.

If you need to speak to the orthoptist, please contact:

Orthoptic Department, Eye Department, Level 2 Outpatients, Torbay Hospital, Lowes Bridge,
Torquay TQ2 7AA

Tel: **(01803)** 654442