

PATIENT INFORMATION

Atropine Eye Drops – home instillation

Using the eye drops

Why have you given me atropine eye drops?

Atropine drops are used when your child's pupils don't dilate well enough in clinic with the normal eye drops to allow a proper examination. This is usually because your child has particularly dark eyes (irises). Atropine drops are stronger than the drops normally used in clinic to dilate the pupils (cyclopentolate). The pupils need to be well dilated to allow us to examine the eyes and measure your child's eyes for glasses.

Atropine drops take longer to work so they need to be given at home.

What does Atropine do?

Atropine drops have two effects:

- **Dilate the pupil** (makes the black dot in the middle of the iris larger)
- **Stop the eye from focusing** which blurs the child's close up vision but allows a full examination of the eyes.

How should I give the eye drops?

1. Wash your hands.
2. Remove the dropper (minim) from its wrapper.
3. The child should be lying or sitting down, face facing upwards towards the ceiling.
4. Gently pull down the lower eyelid of the eye with your finger, taking care not to allow the dropper to touch the outside surface of the eye, and squeeze one drop of atropine into the middle corner of each eye. Then close the eye and if possible, gently press against the inner corner of the eye for at least one minute (punctal occlusion).
5. Wash your hands and wash your child's hands if they have touched their eyes.
6. The drops should be put in your child's eyes once a day in the evening for 3 days before the appointment at the eye clinic, but **not** on the day of the appointment.

Are there any side effects?

- Atropine will blur your child's vision, especially for near. They will be sensitive to bright lights; a sunhat or sunglasses might help. These side effects can last for at least a week.
- Sometimes children experience irritation including redness of the eyes and eyelid swelling. Other rare side effects include a slightly dry mouth and restlessness. These risks can be reduced by using punctal occlusion (see earlier).
- Atropine can be dangerous if it is swallowed. The drops should be stored carefully and out of the reach of children.
- The following side effects have been reported when drops have been swallowed, or when more than the prescribed amount has been used:
 - Fever, dry mouth, dry skin and facial flushing/redness.
 - Constipation, an irregular or slower heartbeat, increased urge or inability to pass urine.
 - Very rarely convulsions, headaches or nausea/vomiting.

Medical advice should be sought immediately if your child experiences these side effects.

- The drops should not be used if your child is unwell or is allergic to atropine sulphate.
- Unused drops should be returned to the hospital pharmacy.

Contact

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

Tel: 01803 654442

For further assistance or to receive this information in a different format, please contact the department which created this leaflet.