

Patient information factsheet

Atropine eye drops for glasses tests

We have given you this factsheet because your child has an appointment for a sight test and we have asked you to put atropine eye drops into your child's eyes before the test. These drops will help the doctor to examine your child's eyes. We hope that this factsheet answers some of the questions that you may have. If you or your child have any further questions or concerns, please speak to a member of our team or contact us using the details at the end of the factsheet.

It is important that you tell us if your child:

- is allergic to any medication
- has high blood pressure
- has a heart condition
- has seizures

Atropine eye drops may not be suitable for them.

What are atropine eye drops?

Atropine eye drops temporarily dilate (widen) the pupils and stop the eyes from changing focus. This will help your child's eye doctor or optometrist to examine your child's eyes and check if they need glasses, or a change to the glasses they currently wear.

How do we use the drops at home?

Your child will need to use the eye drops for two days before their sight test. We will either give you the atropine eye drops to take home, or the eye doctor will write a prescription for you to take to the hospital pharmacy or to your local pharmacy.

The drops come in small, single-use plastic bottles called minims. You will need to put one drop from the minim into each of your child's eyes once a day in the evening. Do this for two days before the glasses test appointment. Do not use the drops on the day of the test.

We will give you two minims bottles, so you will have one to use each time you need to put the drops in.

Can my child continue normal activities while using the drops?

The effects of the atropine eye drops start to wear off after three days, but it can take up to two weeks for them to wear off completely. Your child will have blurred vision until the drops wear off, particularly when looking at close objects, and they may be sensitive to light.

Tell your child's school or nursery teacher and any other carers about these side effects. Each child reacts differently, but it is best to avoid sports until the blurred vision has worn off. Your child may find it easier if they wear a hat or sunglasses outside in bright weather.

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How to use the drops

Do not give your child atropine eye drops if they have a fever (a temperature of 38°C or above) or are allergic to atropine sulphate.

For the **two days** before the appointment, put one drop into each eye following the below instructions. **Do not use the drops on the day of the appointment.**

1. Wash your hands.
2. Ask your child to lie down, or to sit on another adult's lap with their head tilted back onto the adult's arm.
3. Take the cap off the minim bottle.
4. Gently open the eyelids of the first eye, and put one drop in the centre of the inside of the lower eyelid. Do not let the bottle touch the eye.
5. If it is difficult to open the eye, you can leave the lids closed and place the drop where the upper and lower eyelids meet in the centre of the eye. Keep your child lying down. When they open their eye, the drop should trickle into the eye.
6. Close the eye and gently press your finger against the inner corner of the eye for at least one minute. This blocks the duct that runs from the eye into the nose and helps to keep the drop in the eye.
7. Wipe away any excess liquid from your child's face with a clean tissue.
8. Repeat steps 4 to 8 for the other eye using the same minim bottle.
9. Replace the lid on the minim bottle and throw the minim away, even if you have not used all the drops in it. Dispose of it in an outside rubbish bin, so that children cannot get hold of it. Do not throw the drops in the rubbish bin in the house or flush them down the toilet.
10. Wash your hands again.

Once you have finished the course of atropine eye drops, please return any unused minims bottles to a pharmacy.

Please note that atropine is poisonous if swallowed. Make sure that you only use the eye drops as prescribed and keep them out of the reach of children.

Storing the drops

You should store the drops:

- safely out of the reach of children
- at a temperature less than 25°C (room temperature)
- in a dry place away from strong light

Do **not** place the drops near food or drink.

Side effects

Side effects commonly seen in practice include:

- a stinging sensation when the drops are put in (this usually wears off after a couple of minutes)
- blurred vision (especially for close work such as reading)
- a sensitivity to bright light while the pupils are large (wearing a hat or sunglasses may help)

Please let us know if you are concerned about any of these side effects.

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Side effects rarely seen in practice include:

- itchy or swollen eyelids
- red, watering eyes
- fewer tears than usual
- a feeling of pressure inside the eyes
- dryness of the skin or mouth
- skin rashes
- difficulty swallowing
- a high temperature (38°C or above)
- flushing of the face
- restlessness, excitement or irritability
- an irregular heartbeat
- difficulty passing urine (weeing)
- gastrointestinal upset (for example, diarrhoea or vomiting)

Please stop using the drops and contact us immediately if your child experiences any of the rare side effects.

As with all medicines, there is a very small risk of having a severe, life-threatening allergic reaction (anaphylaxis).

In the very unlikely event that a severe side effect occurs, please seek urgent medical help. Call **999** for an ambulance or take your child to your nearest emergency department.

Some additional extremely rare side effects have been reported. For a full list of the potential side effects, please visit: www.medicines.org.uk/emc/product/3738/pil#about-medicine

Contact us

Orthoptic department

Telephone: **023 8120 4789** (Monday to Friday, 8am to 5pm)

Out of hours, please contact the eye emergency department.

Eye emergency department

Telephone triage line: **023 8120 6592** (Monday to Friday, 8am to 7.30pm, weekends and bank holidays, 8am to 6pm)

If your child needs to see a doctor while their pupils are still large, for example if they have an accident, you should let the doctor know that they have had dilating eye drops.

If you are a patient at one of our hospitals and need this document translated, or in another format such as easy read, large print, Braille or audio, please telephone **0800 484 0135** or email **patientsupporthub@uhs.nhs.uk**

For help preparing for your visit, arranging an interpreter or accessing the hospital, please visit **www.uhs.nhs.uk/additionalsupport**