

Atropine Occlusion in Children

Instillation of drops / ointment

Why has my child been prescribed Atropine?

Atropine drops / ointment may be used as an initial treatment of amblyopia (lazy eye) or when patching treatment is not working. The main aim of atropine occlusion is to blur the vision in the good eye (when viewing close objects) to promote the vision in the weaker eye.

What are the effects of Atropine?

Atropine has two effects when instilled in the eyes:

- Dilates the pupil (makes the black part of the eye larger).
- Stops the eye from focusing properly – blurring the child’s vision temporarily.

How often should I instill the drops to the good eye?

The atropine drops / ointment should be instilled once daily for the first week and then on alternate days after that. We advise using them in the morning for the first two days to assess any side effects. The drops can then be instilled whilst the child is asleep if this is preferred.

How long do the effects of the Atropine last?

Atropine will cause blurred vision that may last up to seven days or more after using it. The pupil may remain dilated for up to 14 days.

Are there any side effects I should look for?

- Do not use Atropine if your child suffers from heart problems or has a high fever.
- It will make the dilated eye sensitive to light so avoid bright light. Wearing a sun hat may help.
- The child may feel a little discomfort when initially instilled.
- Tell your Ophthalmologist or Orthoptist if your child is taking any other medication.
- **STOP USING THE ATROPINE AND SEEK MEDICAL ADVICE IMMEDIATELY IF** your child becomes hot and complains of a sore throat, becomes irritable or develops any of the following symptoms; a rash, a headache or nausea/ vomiting.

How should I instill the Atropine Eye Drops / Ointment?

1. Gently pull down the lower eyelid of the good eye with your finger.
2. Instill one drop of Atropine or squeeze a little ointment (about the size of a match head) into the area between the eyeball and the lower eyelid.
3. Release the eyelid.
4. If using Atropine drops (rather than ointment) press gently on the inner corner of the eyelids for one minute. This will avoid the solution draining away down the tear duct into the nose and being swallowed and then absorbed systemically.
5. Always wash your hands and your child's hands after using the drops to avoid it being taken internally.
6. Repeat the procedure at approximately the same time each day.
7. If you should run out of atropine eye drops or ointment, contact the ophthalmologist for a further prescription.
8. Continue instilling as instructed until and including the day of your next appointment.

It is important that you:

- Do not continue using atropine if you have missed an appointment as this may induce unwanted effects.
- Do not use the Atropine beyond the expiry date.
- Do not use it after it has been opened for four weeks.
- Store the Atropine upright in a dry place, away from strong light and below 25°C (room temperature).
- Keep all medicines out of the reach of children.

WARNING: Atropine is poisonous if taken internally.