

Atropine eye drops to treat a lazy eye

Information for parents and carers



Why do we use atropine eye drops?

Atropine drops can be used as an alternative to wearing an eye patch. Atropine drops may also be used in addition to wearing a patch.

How do the drops work?

Atropine eye drops have two effects when instilled in the eye:

- They dilate the pupil (makes the black part of the eye larger)
- They relax the muscles in the 'good' eye and make it difficult to focus (adjust the eye) properly. This will force the weaker eye to work harder and improve their vision. If your child wears spectacles they should continue to do so.

Before using eye drops

Please inform the orthoptist of any changes to your child's health/medical condition, any allergies or medication they are taking. Do not use atropine eye drops if your child has heart problems or a high fever.

How to use

Put one drop of atropine into your child's good eye (**right eye or left eye**) **once** on a Saturday and **once** on Sunday for 6-8 weeks.

Gently pull down the lower eyelid to make a small pocket. Apply **one** drop into this pocket. Gently press on the inner corner of the eye for 30 seconds. This will prevent the drop running down into the throat and reduce the chance of the drug being absorbed and causing side-effects.

Atropine is supplied as single use vials. Dispose of each vial after use

Do not use atropine drops if your child has a fever.

Remember to wash your hands and your child's hands before and after using the eye drops.

Possible side effects

Minor

- Unpleasant taste at the back of the mouth immediately after applying drops. This does not last and may be relieved by a drink of juice.
- The pupil (black bit in the centre of the eye) will become dilated (large). This may last for a few days (in some cases 7-10 days) after the child has stopped using the eye drops and make the dilated eye sensitive to light, a peaked hat may help.
- Blurred vision. This is more of a problem in children of school age. They may not be able to focus (adjust their eyes) properly to read. If your child attends school, please inform their teacher of this.
- Thirst. Make sure the child has plenty to drink.

Other side effects

Rarely your child might experience other side effects such as a change in heart rate, flushing of the skin, dryness of the mouth, or giddiness/light headedness, vomiting or nightmares. If any of these symptoms occur **stop** the drops and contact the orthoptist on the number below and your GP/doctor for further advice and remember to inform them your child has been using atropine eye drops.

Symptoms of atropine overdose

Atropine may affect other parts of the body as well as the eye. An early sign of this is flushing (redness of the skin). If your child experiences flushing it may mean they have absorbed too much atropine. If this happens, do not apply any more drops. Give your child plenty of water to drink and keep them cool.

Safety

Keep all medicines out of the reach and sight of children.

When you come to the hospital, bring any unused drops with you for safe disposal.

Ongoing care

The orthoptist will see you regularly at the eye clinic to monitor the progress of your child's vision, during this treatment. It is essential that all appointments are attended whilst your child is using atropine eye drops.

If you have any concerns about your child's eyes, please contact your orthoptist:

Orthoptist:

Contact number: