

# Atropine 1% eye drops

## Other formats

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## What are atropine 1% eye drops?

Atropine 1% eye drops are a sterile solution for the treatment of amblyopia (weaker vision in one eye in children). Amblyopia is often called lazy eye and a squint is one of the most common causes.

The eye drops are dropped into the eye. This has two effects:

- Dilates the pupil (makes the black part of the eye large). The dilated eye may be sensitive to bright light.
- Stops the eye from focusing normally, which blurs the vision.

The squint may swap to the other eye. The eye drops may blur the vision in the good eye sufficiently that your child will prefer to look with the eye that normally turns. This is nothing to be concerned about and is an indication that the drops are working well

It is an alternative way of improving the vision in a lazy eye.

## How does it work?

We use the drops to blur the vision in the good eye (when viewing close objects) to promote the vision in the weaker eye.

## Dosage

Atropine eye drops should be instilled in the **GOOD** eye **twice a week**. The vision will be reviewed by an orthoptist after one month. If there is no significant improvement, the atropine may be increased to daily instillation. The orthoptist will advise you if this is necessary.

## How do I administer the eye drops?

They can be put in when your child is asleep.

1. Always first wash your hands

2. Make sure your child is sitting comfortably with their head tipped backwards
3. Gently pull down the lower eyelid of the good eye with your finger
4. Instill one drop of atropine into the area between the eyeball and the lower eyelid
5. Release the eyelid
6. Press gently on the inner corner of the eye for one minute. This will avoid the solution draining away into the nose and being swallowed and then absorbed into the body
7. Wash your hands after instilling atropine – if you accidentally get some in your own eye, it will have the same effect!
8. Repeat the procedure twice a week at approximately the same time on both days, or daily as instructed. If you should run out of the atropine drops, contact the Orthoptic Department at NDDH (numbers at the end of this leaflet)

Continue the treatment until your next orthoptic appointment.

## How long does the effect of eye drops last?

Once the atropine has been discontinued, the blurred vision may continue for up to 10 days and the large pupil may remain for up to 14 days.

## What to do if my child miss a dose

Instill the eye drops as soon as you remember the missed dose. However, if it is almost time for the next dose, skip the missed dose and continue your regular dosing schedule. **Do not instill or apply a double dose to make up for a missed one.**

## Important information about atropine eye drops

Do not use atropine if your child has heart problems or has a high fever.

Inform the orthoptist and/or ophthalmologist if your child is taking any other medication.

Atropine eye drops should not be administered to children under three years old (children under three may be asked to use the atropine eye drops at the discretion of the consultant ophthalmologist).

### It is also important that you:

- Do not use atropine beyond the expiry date
- Do not use it after it has been opened for more than four weeks
- Store the atropine in a dry place, away from strong light and at room temperature. Dispose of any unused atropine safely.

## What are the alternatives?

Alternative treatment is by conventional patching, eg wearing a sticky or material patch on the good eye for an agreed number of hours per day.

If treatment is not carried out, the sight will remain reduced or even deteriorate further as it is lack of proper use that has caused it to become 'lazy'. To achieve the best results, treatment should be carried out before the child reaches seven years of age. Treatment may not work after the age of seven.

## Possible side-effects

Your child may feel a little discomfort when the atropine eye drops are first put in.

Atropine may cause side-effects. Tell your child's GP or orthoptist if any of these symptoms are severe or do not go away:

- inflamed skin on the eyelids and surrounding skin
- temperature
- sore throat
- rash
- headaches
- nausea
- vomiting
- irritability

Some side-effects may be serious. If you experience any of the following symptoms, call the GP or orthoptist immediately:

- fever
- Irritability
- fast pulse
- irregular heartbeat
- mental confusion

If your child reacts adversely in any way to the atropine, stop using it and seek advice immediately from the GP or orthoptist.

## Do I need to inform my child's school?

If your child is at school or nursery, please inform their teacher/carer about the atropine eye drop treatment, so they know to expect one pupil to be larger than the other.

Your child may want to hold books closer and their handwriting may be less neat than usual.

As the pupil is dilated your child may be sensitive to bright light. Therefore, he/she may be more comfortable to sit facing away from a window.

If your child needs to be seen by any other doctor or health professional during the treatment, it is important to inform them that atropine drops are being used.

## Follow-up

A follow-up appointment after one month will be made with the orthoptist.

## Further information

For more information on atropine, please read the information sheet that comes with your drug or medicine.

If there is anything further you would like to know, please contact the Orthoptic Department on **01271 322469**.

## References

South West Regional Guidelines for Atropine Occlusion

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## PALS

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) ensures that the NHS listens to patients, relatives, carers and friends, answers questions and resolves concerns as quickly as possible. If you have a query or concern call 01271 314090 or email [ndht.pals@nhs.net](mailto:ndht.pals@nhs.net). You can also visit the PALS and Information Centre in person at North Devon District Hospital, Barnstaple.

## Have your say

Royal Devon University Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust aims to provide high quality services. However, please tell us when something could be improved. If you have a comment or compliment about a service or treatment, please raise your comments with a member of staff or the PALS team in the first instance.

'Care Opinion' comments forms are on all wards or online at [www.careopinion.org.uk](http://www.careopinion.org.uk).

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Royal Devon University Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust  
Raleigh Park, Barnstaple  
Devon EX31 4JB  
Tel. 01271 322577  
[www.royaldevon.nhs.uk](http://www.royaldevon.nhs.uk)

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Email: [ndht.contactus@nhs.net](mailto:ndht.contactus@nhs.net)