



**University
Hospitals Sussex**
NHS Foundation Trust

Using atropine eyedrops before your child's eye test

Ophthalmology

Patient information

What is this information about?

This information is about using atropine eye drops before an eye test (refraction) for children. It explains:

- Why the drops are needed (to help get the right glasses prescription)
- How and when to use them
- Possible side effects and safety tips.

Why have I been given this information?

You have been given this information because your child needs to have an eye test (refraction) to check their glasses prescription. Atropine drops are used to help the optometrist or ophthalmologist (eye doctor) perform refraction.

It is important to read this information so that you can prepare your child for the refraction test by using the atropine drops. If you do not use the atropine drops, your child will not be able to have the refraction test.

You can also share this information with anyone else looking after your child, and your child's school, so that they are aware of the side effects.

What is refraction?

Refraction is a test to find out what strength glasses your child needs.

An optometrist or ophthalmologist will check your child's eyes. They will do this by holding up lenses and using a special light. This is called refraction. This helps them to calculate the right strength of glasses for your child.

What do atropine eye drops do and how does this help with refraction?

Atropine sulphate eye drops enlarge the pupils of the eye. It temporarily paralyses the muscles inside the eye so the optometrist or ophthalmologist can perform refraction.

Why does my child need atropine eye drops?

Atropine is used when your child's pupils do not get big enough with Cyclopentolate drops which are normally used. This is because your child has particularly dark irises (the coloured part of the eye).

What happens if my child does not have the drops?

If your child does not use the drops, we cannot do the refraction test.

What are the side effects of these drops?

- **Light sensitivity.** Because the drops stop the pupil reacting to the light, this can make them sensitive to light. Wearing sunglasses or a peaked hat may reduce any discomfort. This will wear off when the pupil returns to its normal size. The pupils may remain dilated for up to 14 days.
- **Blurred vision and reduced ability to focus.** This may last up to 7 days or more.

Tell your child's school that your child has used atropine eye drops and what side effects to expect.

When should I put the drops in?

You have an appointment for refraction at the Eye Department on _____ at _____ and will require Atropine Sulphate 1% preservative free eye drops.

One drop to be used in **each eye** at night, for **3 nights** before the appointment.

Please start the drops on _____

Do not use the drops on the day of the appointment.

Are there any risks?

There are a few rare side effects of Atropine that you should look out for. If you notice any of the symptoms below, please stop the use of atropine immediately and seek medical advice:

- Hot flushed appearance
- Dry mouth
- Sore red eye
- Rash
- Headaches
- Nausea.

**Atropine is poisonous if it is swallowed or eaten.
If you think this has happened, take your child to the nearest
Accident and Emergency department.**

How do I use the drops?

- Always wash your hands before giving your child any eye drops.
- You should put one drop into each eye for 3 evenings before the appointment.
- Pull the eyelids apart and put one drop in the eye. Be careful not to touch the surface of the eye with the applicator.
- If the drop misses the eye, you can attempt a second drop. Never try more than twice. Wipe away any drops that get onto hands or face with a wet flannel.
- You may find it easier to put the drops in when your child is asleep.

How do I store atropine eye drops?

Atropine should be stored out of reach of children, in a cool dry place and out of direct sunlight. The bottle should be discarded once you have completed the 3 day course.

Who can I contact for further information and advice?

St Richard's Hospital

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Southlands

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uhsussex.orthopticsrld@nhs.net

Sussex Eye Hospital

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Princess Royal Hospital

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