

## Department of Ophthalmology

### Paediatric Ophthalmology

# Atropine occlusion: Instillation of drops

## Why has my child been prescribed Atropine?

Atropine drops 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 which blurs the child's near (or close-up) vision.

## How often should I instil the eye drops?

The atropine drops should be instilled once daily unless advised otherwise by your ophthalmologist. We advise using them in the morning for the first two days to assess any side effects. The drops can 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 which may last up to seven days or more after using it. The pupil may also remain dilated for up to 14 days.

## Are there any side effects?

- 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 or sun glasses may help.
- The child may feel a little discomfort when the drops are initially instilled, although the drops do not sting.
- Tell your ophthalmologist or orthoptist if your child is taking any other medication.
- If your child becomes hot and complains of a sore throat, becomes irritable or develops any of the following symptoms: a rash, headaches, nausea / vomiting, **stop using the atropine and seek medical advice immediately.**

## How should I instil the Atropine drops?

1. Gently pull down the lower eyelid of the good eye with your finger.
2. Instil one drop of Atropine into the area between the eyeball and the lower eyelid.
3. Release the eyelid.
4. Gently press 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 systemically.
5. Always wash your hands and your child's hands after using the drops to avoid it being taken internally.
6. If you should run out of atropine eye drops contact the orthoptist, paediatric clinical nurse specialist or ophthalmologist for a further prescription.
7. Continue instilling as instructed until and including the day of your next appointment.

### It is important that you:

- 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).
- Do not continue using atropine if you have missed an appointment as this may induce unwanted effects.
- Keep all medicines out of the reach of children.
- Attend following appointments to monitor effect of Atropine occlusion on vision.
- **Warning:** Atropine is poisonous if taken internally.

## For further information, or if you have any concerns, please contact:

### The Orthoptic Department

Clinic 3,  
Outpatients,  
Addenbrookes Hospital,  
Hills Road,  
Cambridge,  
CB2 0QQ

Telephone number: (01223) 216528

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**If no response is gained form the CNS please ring the emergency eye Clinic number on (01223) 216778**, or the main reception desk of Clinic 3 on (01223) 216401



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For advice and support in quitting, contact your GP or the free NHS Stop Smoking helpline on 0800 169 0 169

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[patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk](mailto:patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk)

**Document history**

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