

ATROPINE TREATMENT FOR AMBLYOPIA ("LAZY EYE")

WHAT TO EXPECT

Atropine drops are being used to treat your child's amblyopia. Atropine blurs close-up vision in the better-seeing eye. This encourages use of the eye with poor vision and improves vision in that eye over time. With atropine penalization you will not have to fight constantly with your child to keep a patch over the better-seeing eye.

DO THE DROPS HURT?

No! Unlike other types of eye drops, atropine drops typically do not sting.

HOW DO I PUT THEM IN?

With your child lying down and looking up to the ceiling, hold the eyelids apart and place the drop anywhere between the lids. If your child is frightened, try giving the drop before they wake up. In some children it IS necessary for one adult to hold the child while the other gives the drop. If you are unsure if the drop went in the eye, wipe any extra off the skin, give one more drop and again wipe the skin. Wait until the next dose until trying again if you are still unsure if either drop went in. Eventually a routine will be established, and it will become easy to put the drops in. Remember to wash your hands before and after giving the eye drops.

WHAT ARE THE SIDE EFFECTS?

Rarely, a child can develop redness and swelling around the eye and have occasional mood variations, headaches, nausea, fever, or facial flushing. If this occurs, stop using the drops and contact us.

HOW DO I STORE THE DROPS?

They may be kept at room temperature. Be sure to keep the atropine drops out of the reach of children. If a child drinks atropine from the bottle, contact an emergency room or poison control immediately.

I GAVE A DROP OF ATROPINE FIVE DAYS AGO AND MY CHILD'S PUPIL IS STILL DILATED. IS SOMETHING WRONG?

No. A single drop of atropine may dilate the pupil for up to a week. Although the pupil remains dilated, the blurring effect of atropine wears off in 1-3 days.

SHOULD MY CHILD WEAR SUNGLASSES, SINCE THE PUPIL IS ALWAYS DILATED BY THE ATROPINE?

Outdoors on a sunny day, your child will be more comfortable wearing sunglasses and a hat. If your child already wears glasses, these can be coated with a clear ultraviolet filter, which will help.

HOW DOES MY CHILD FUNCTION AT SCHOOL WITH THE BETTER EYE BLURRED?

The atropine blurs the good eye for near work. This forces your child to use the poorer eye for reading. Allow your child to hold reading material close. If the atropine seems to be interfering with schoolwork, contact us.

HOW LONG WILL I NEED TO USE THE ATROPINE?

Treatment may be continued for months or even years, depending on the age of your child and the severity of their amblyopia.

MY APPOINTMENT IS NEXT WEEK. SHOULD I CONTINUE USING THE ATROPINE DROPS?

Discontinue the atropine drops one full week prior to your appointment (or before any surgery) unless your doctor says otherwise.

I PUT ATROPINE DROPS IN MY CHILD'S EYE, BUT NOW MY OWN PUPIL IS DILATED. WHAT HAPPENED?

Atropine may have inadvertently reached your own eye. Hand washing after instillation will help prevent this. You may have blurred vision and a dilated pupil for up to a week.

If you have any other questions about atropine treatment, please don't hesitate to contact us!