

## Children's ophthalmology

# Pupil-dilating eye drops

## Information for patients, relatives and carers

The assessment of your child's eyes will involve the optometrist (optician) or ophthalmologist (doctor) looking inside the eyes, and testing the need for glasses. Cyclopentolate eye drops are used during this assessment.

One drop must be put into both eyes at home and will take about 1 hour to work. This means when you arrive you shouldn't need to wait for further dilation.

There is no alternative to the eye drops if a detailed and thorough examination of your child's eyes is needed.

### Effects of the eye drops

Cyclopentolate drops are needed to dilate (make bigger) the pupil and relax your child's focussing eye muscles. This will enable the optometrist or ophthalmologist to accurately test for glasses and assess the eye's health.

The drops will be put in by the orthoptist and will take at least 30 minutes to work. If your child has dark eyes, we may need to put in two sets of drops. When the pupil is enlarged the optometrist will have a clear view of the back of your child's eye and can judge what strength of glasses are needed. You or your child will notice:

- enlarged pupils (the black part in the middle of the eye) for up to 24 hours
- sensitivity to sunlight for up to 24 hours (due to the enlarged pupils)
- blurred vision when viewing close objects or reading

### How to help your child

To ensure your child is as comfortable as possible following the eye drops, please:

- use sunglasses and/or a sun hat when outdoors
- take care when crossing roads or running around
- explain to your child's teacher that they have had the eye drops and so this may affect their work, due to blurry vision and sensitivity to light

### How to use the eye drops

Only use the eye drops given to you by the hospital in the box with the instructions written on. Only use the eye drops for the child who they are intended for. Throw all the packaging away after use. **Put the eye drops in 1 hour before your appointment time or as close to this as possible.**

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### Before you instil the eye drops:

- wash your hands thoroughly with soap and hot water. Repeat this after putting in the eye drops
- ask your child to lie down so it's easier to put the eye drops in

### Putting in the eye drops:

- you may need help from another adult. You may find it helpful to wrap a small child or baby in a blanket to help keep them still
- open the packet and take out the tube containing the eye drops (called a minim). Remove the lid (twist and pull firmly) and put the lid in a bin or out of reach from children immediately
- hold the tube with your dominant hand and use the other hand to gently pull down the lower eye lid. Encourage your child to look up to the ceiling. Squeeze the tube until there has been at least 1 drop in contact with the inside of the lower lid. If possible, try to avoid the top of the minim touching any part of your child's eye
- repeat the above step for the second eye. You may find it easier to do the second eye immediately rather than have a break
- alternatively, ask your child to gently close their eyes, put the drops to the inner part of their eye and ask your child to open their eyes
- once the eye drops have been put in, they can sometimes sting a little. The best way to stop the stinging is to ask your child to keep blinking as much as possible. You could tell them to 'make 10 big blinks to wash the eye drops away'
- wipe away any excess drops from your child's face with a clean, soft tissue. They can 'dab' their eyes with this but try not to rub the eyes

## Side effects

- **Common** - burning/stinging/redness of the eye, eye irritation and temporary blurred vision
- **Rare** - dizziness, fainting, mental/mood changes (e.g., confusion, hallucinations, restlessness)

A serious allergic reaction is very rare, however, if the following occur, please go to A&E:

- rash/itching
- swelling of face/tongue/neck
- extreme/serious dizziness or trouble breathing

## Who can I contact for more information?

If your child is in the department and has a difficulty, then let a member of staff know. If you are not in the department and have concerns, please ring the children's outpatient nurses. During clinic hours, phone **020 3312 5146**.

### St Mary's Hospital

Children's outpatients: Telephone **020 3312 7683** (08.30 – 16.30 Monday to Friday, except public holidays).

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## Western eye hospital

Orthoptic department: Telephone **020 3312 3256** (08.30 – 16.30 Monday to Friday, except public holidays).

## Emergency department at Western Eye Hospital open 08.00 – 20.30

The Western Eye Hospital, 153-173 Marylebone Road, London NW1 5QH

Telephone: **020 3312 3245**

## How do I make a comment about my visit?

We aim to provide the best possible service and staff will be happy to answer any of the questions you may have. If you have any **suggestions** or **comments** about your visit, please either speak to a member of staff or contact the patient advice and liaison service (**PALS**) on **020 3312 7777** (10.00 – 16.00, Monday to Friday). You can also email PALS at [imperial.pals@nhs.net](mailto:imperial.pals@nhs.net) The PALS team will listen to your concerns, suggestions or queries and is often able to help solve problems on your behalf.

Alternatively, you may wish to complain by contacting our complaints department:

Complaints department, fourth floor, Salton House, St Mary's Hospital, Praed Street  
London W2 1NY

Email: [ICHC-tr.Complaints@nhs.net](mailto:ICHC-tr.Complaints@nhs.net)

Telephone: **020 3312 1337 / 1349**

## Alternative formats

This leaflet can be provided on request in large print or easy read, as a sound recording, in Braille or in alternative languages. Please email the communications team:  
[imperial.communications@nhs.net](mailto:imperial.communications@nhs.net)

## Wi-fi

Wi-fi is available at our Trust. For more information visit our website: [www.imperial.nhs.uk](http://www.imperial.nhs.uk)