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How to use eye drops for someone else properly



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All information above has been reviewed by Ophthalmology specialists
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1. Steps

- (1) Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water before and after giving eye drops. Dry your hands with a clean towel.
- (2) Keep the patient in a supine position or seated on a chair, and tilt the head back slightly. Confirm which eye will receive the eye drops and stand to the side.
- (3) Shake the eye drops container gently, especially the drops in suspension.
- (4) If the eyes have crust or discharge, clean the eyelids and eyelashes with sterile cotton swabs (from the inner to the outer canthus).
- (5) Check the container to make sure it is the right drug. Remove the cap of the eye drop bottle and place the dropper cap on its side. Pull the lower lid down with a cotton swab to form a pocket for drop (Figure 1). To avoid cornea damage by the drug bottle, ask the patient to open both eyes and look at a point on the ceiling. Position the tip of the eye drop bottle correctly so it does not touch the patient's eye. Squeeze the bottle until a single drop falls into the pocket (Figure 2).



Figure 1.



Figure 2.

- (6) When using eye ointments, squeeze approximately 1 cm of ointment into the pocket made by the lower eyelid (from the inner to the outer canthus) (Figure 3). Whirl the tube to disconnect the ointment from it. Avoid touching the tip of the tube against the patient's eye to prevent contamination.
- (7) Ask the patient to close their eyes for 5-10 seconds so that the eye drops can spread evenly on the surface of the eyeball. Meanwhile, use one finger or a cotton swab to apply gentle pressure to the inner canthus for 30-60 seconds (Figure 4). This prevents the medication from draining into the nasal passages and getting into their mouths or throats.



Figure 3.



Figure 4.

- (8) Wipe away excess liquid with a cotton swab (from the inner to the outer canthus).

2. Always remember

- (1) Follow the directions carefully. Do not allow anyone else to use your drops, and avoid instilling them into the unaffected eye.
- (2) Generally, eye drops can be stored at room temperature, some eye drops should be refrigerated. Roll the bottle between your palms and warm it to room temperature before using it.

- (3) Never use the eye drop when its color has changed or when it has passed the expiration date.
- (4) For the eye drop in suspension, shake it before use.
- (5) When multiple eye medications are used at the same time, wait at least 5 minutes before putting the second drop into the eye.
- (6) When eye drops and eye ointment are used at the same time, put the eye drops before applying the ointment.
- (7) It may temporarily cause blurred vision after using eye drops and eye ointment, be careful and pay attention to the patient's safety.

3. Conclusion

Applying eye drops properly to someone allows the eye drops to reach full efficacy, which would speed up recovery and keep your eyes healthy.

4. References

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Let us take the quiz to make sure you understand.

1. Before applying eye drops, it is recommended to thoroughly wash your hands with soap and water both before and after the application.

Yes No Don't know

2. When wiping away excess liquid from applying eye drops, use a cotton swab from the inner to the outer canthus.

Yes No Don't know

3. Eye drops should be used even if their color has changed, as long as they are within the expiration date.

Yes No Don't know

4. When multiple eye medications are used at the same time, it is recommended to wait at least 5 minutes before applying the second drop to the eye.

Yes No Don't know

5. When using eye drops and ointment simultaneously, apply the eye drops first before applying the ointment.

Yes No Don't know