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How to instill your own eye drops



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

- (1) Before and after giving the eye drops: wash your hands with soap and water, and dry your hands with a clean towel.
- (2) If your eyes have crust or discharge, clean the eyelids and eyelashes with sterile cotton swabs (from the inner to the outer canthus).
- (3) Shake the eye drop container gently, especially the drops in suspension.
- (4) Remove the cap from the eye drop bottle and place the dropper cap on its side. Avoid touching the tip of the dropper with your hand or any object since eye drops must remain sterile.
- (5) Keep a supine posture or sit on a chair with the head slightly tilted back.
- (6) Confirm the correct eye drops and the affected eye. Pull down the lower lid with your index finger or a cotton swab to expose the conjunctival sac (Figure 1). Look up, gently squeeze the bottle, and allow one drop to fall into the pocket (Figure 2). Avoid blinking, wiping your eyes, or squeezing your eyelids.



Figure 1.



Figure 2.

- (7) When using eye ointments, squeeze approximately 1 cm of ointment into the conjunctival sac (from the inner corner of the eye to the outer canthus) (Figure 3). Whirl the tube to break the ointment. Avoid contact with the tip of the tube with your eyelashes and eyelid to prevent contamination.
- (8) Close the eyes slightly for 5-10 seconds, so that the eye drops can be evenly absorbed 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 your nasal passages and entering your mouth or throat. Besides, it could enhance efficacy by keeping the medication in the eye longer.

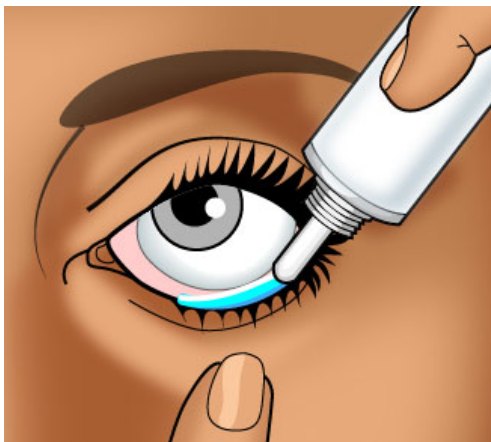


Figure 3.



Figure 4.

- (9) Gently wipe away excess liquid or ointment with a sterile cotton swab (from the inner to the outer canthus).

2. Precautions

- (1) Follow the directions carefully. Do not allow others to use your drops, and avoid applying them to the unaffected eye.

- (2) Generally, eye drops could be stored at room temperature. Keep in mind that some eye drops need to be stored in refrigerator.
- (3) Pay attention to the color and the expiration date of the eye drops, and discard them if it is discolored or outdated.
- (4) Shake the ophthalmic suspension before using it.
- (5) When multiple eye medications are used at the same time, wait at least 5 minutes before delivering the second medication to the same eye to keep the effect of eye drops.
- (6) Apply the eye drops before putting in the ointment when they are used simultaneously.
- (7) After giving eye drops or ointment, it can temporarily cause blurred vision, so be careful and pay attention to safety.

3. Conclusion

There are many kinds of eye drops, and any of them could be a challenge to get into your eye. But with a few tips and some practice, you will become more comfortable with the process. The timing and dosage of your eye drops can make a big difference in your treatment. Whether you use drops for glaucoma, dry eye, infection, or an allergy, you must use the drops correctly to get the full benefit. Follow your doctor's instructions as closely as possible.

4. References

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Gudgel, D. T. (2023, May 05). *How to put in eye drops*.

<https://www.aao.org/eye-health/treatments/how-to-put-in-eye-drops>

Let us take the quiz to make sure you understand.

1. It is advised to gently shake the eye drop container to ensure proper mixing, especially if the drops are in suspension.

☐Yes ☐No ☐Don't know

2. Eye drops should be delivered to the conjunctival sac with the head in a slightly tilted back position.

☐Yes ☐No ☐Don't know

3. Eye ointment should be applied before eye drops when used simultaneously.

☐Yes ☐No ☐Don't know

4. Applying gentle pressure to the inner canthus after giving eye drops helps prevent the medication from draining into the nasal passages.

☐Yes ☐No ☐Don't know

5. After giving eye drops or an ointment, it can temporarily cause blurred vision, so be careful and pay attention to safety.

☐Yes ☐No ☐Don't know