

Patient information

Atropine eye drops for children

What are Atropine eye drops?

These are drops that temporarily enlarge (dilate) the eye's pupil and temporarily blur vision. This allows the doctor to examine your child's eyes to see if glasses are needed, and to check if the eyes are healthy.

Why have we chosen to use Atropine?

For very dark eyed children, the dark pigment in the eye prevents sufficient dilation, with our alternative dilating drops, for accurate assessment. Atropine has a much stronger effect. We ask for the drops to be put in at home to allow for full dilation.

What effect might there be?

- The drops stop the eye from focusing so vision becomes blurred, especially for close work. Your child's teacher or nursery leader should be made aware of this.
- The child may feel a little discomfort when putting drops into the eye.

- The drops vary in their effect and may last up to 24 hours.
- Some children may become sensitive to bright light. Wearing sunglasses or a sun hat may help.
- Whilst the vision is blurred, and the pupils are enlarged, your child should take extra care.

How long do the effects last?

The pupil may remain enlarged for up to four days.

Are there any problems?

- Do not use Atropine if your child suffers from heart problems, or has a high fever.
- Avoid bright light - wearing a sun hat or sunglasses may help.
- Tell your Ophthalmologist or Orthoptist if your child is taking any other medication.
- ***Stop using the atropine and seek medical advice immediately*** if your child becomes hot and complains of a sore throat, becomes irritable or develops: a rash, a headache or nausea / vomiting

Putting the drops in at home

- One drop should be put in each eye the night before the appointment and again in the morning of the day of the appointment.

- We will give you two packets of the drops to take home. One to be used to put one drop in each eye the night before (and then thrown away) and one to be used to put one drop in each eye on the morning of the appointment.

Can my child return to school/ nursery today?

If your child's teacher is happy to provide the necessary supervision to ensure safety, then there is no reason why your child may not return to school or attend nursery. However, it is advisable not to take part in sports and games lessons until the blurred vision has worn off completely.

Can my child go swimming later today?

Whilst swimming after eye drops will not harm the eyes, safety in the water is vital. Your child's vision will be blurred after the drops. It is best not to allow them to swim unless you are sure they will be closely supervised.

A final decision regarding activities after having eye drops is probably best made just before the time of the event as each child is different and will vary in what they are able to do after eye drops.

It is important that you:

- Do not use the Atropine beyond the expiry date.
- Store the Atropine upright in a dry place, away from strong light and below 25°C (room temperature).
- Keep all medicines out of the reach of children.

Warning: Atropine is poisonous if taken orally. Keep out of the reach and sight of children.

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

Orthoptic Department, Eye Treatment Centre
West Suffolk Hospital
Hardwick Lane
Bury St Edmunds, IP33 2QZ

Telephone number: 01284 713817

or contact your GP or the emergency services.

West Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust is actively involved in clinical research. Your doctor, clinical team or the research and development department may contact you regarding specific clinical research studies that you might be interested in participating in. If you do not wish to be contacted for these purposes, please email info.gov@wsh.nsh.uk. This will in no way affect the care or treatment you receive.

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<https://www.accessable.co.uk/organisations/west-suffolk-nhs-foundation-trust>



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