

Atropine Treatment for Amblyopia: 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.

Use 1 drop of _____% atropine in the	Right	_____	once each week
	eye	_____	every Saturday and Sunday morning
	Left	_____	every other morning (M-W-F)
		_____	every Monday through Friday morning
		_____	every morning

Do the drops hurt? No. Unlike other types of eye drops, atropine drops usually 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 the child is frightened, try giving the drop before he or she wakes up. In some children it is necessary for one adult to hold the child while the other gives the drop. Eventually a routine will be established, and it will get easier 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, or fever, or facial flushing. If this occurs, stop using the drops and contact our office.

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, give syrup of ipecac and contact an emergency room 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 the atropine wears off in 1-3 days.

Will it harm my child to go outside in bright sunshine with a dilated pupil? No, but "play it by ear": if your child seems uncomfortable, provide sunglasses that block UV light and/or a cap with a brim.

How can my child function at school with the better eye blurred? The atropine blurs the good eye for near work. This forces the child to use the poorer eye for reading. Allow the child to hold reading material close. If the atropine seems to be interfering with schoolwork, call our office.

How long will I need to use the atropine? Treatment may be continued for months, or even years, depending on the age of the child and the severity of the amblyopia.

My appointment is next week. Should I continue using the atropine drops? Discontinue the atropine drops one full week before 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? You forgot to wash your hands after giving the eye drops. Be careful not to get the atropine in your own eyes. You could have blurred vision and a dilated pupil for up to a week.

If you have any other questions about atropine treatment, please do not hesitate to give us a call.