

The Wilmer Ophthalmological Institute

Pediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus

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Atropine Treatment for Amblyopia ("Lazy Eye") - 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 with your child to keep a patch over the better-seeing eye.

	Right	q once each week.
Use 1 drop of ___% atropine in the	eye	q ____ consecutive mornings each week.
	Left	q every other morning.
		q 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 eye lids 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 easy 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 us.

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. Remember to **notify any pediatrician, family doctor, or emergency room doctor that your child is using atropine eye drops.**

Should my child wear sunglasses, since the pupil is always dilated by the atropine? Outdoors on a sunny day, your child will be more comfortable wearing sunglasses. If your child already wears glasses, they can be coated with a clear ultraviolet filter, which will help.

How can my child function at school with the better eye blurred? The atropine blurs the good eye for **near** work. This encourages use of the poorer eye for reading. Allow the child to hold reading material close. If the atropine seems to be interfering with school work, contact us.

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 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 eye; you could have blurred vision and a dilated pupil for up to a week.

If you have any other questions about atropine treatment, please don't hesitate to give us a call.