Ministry of Health

The Tashkent Pharmaceutical institute

Original Work

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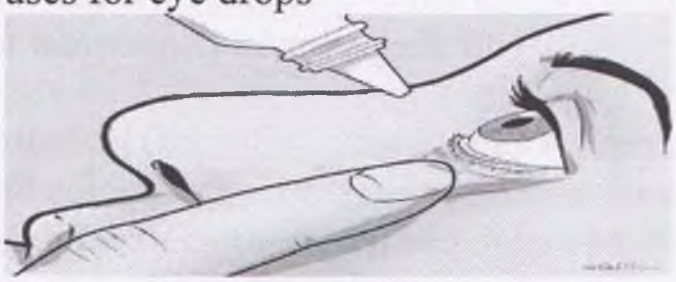
Eye drops

Whether eye drops are treating 'lazy eye', working to delay or prevent glaucoma, or helping dry or irritated eyes stay moist, they're getting more use than ever before. Here's what's new about eye drops.
What are eye drops?

Eye drops usually contain saline as a base ingredient. Depending on their intended use, they may also contain lubricating, tear-replacing (artificial tears), or anti-redness substances, as well as medications. Eye drops may be bought over the counter for some eye problems, some may be prescription only and other may be used by eye specialists.
Common uses for eye drops



Eye drops are commonly used for:

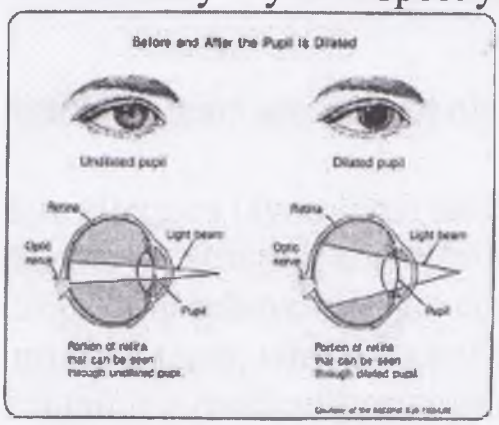
Cataract surgery (lens removal and replacement with an artificial lens). Before surgery, eye drops are used to reduce infection, make the pupil larger and numb the eye area. After surgery, eye drops may reduce the risk of infection and help healing.

Conjunctivitis is an infection or irritation of the conjunctiva -- the clear lining of the eyelids and the white surface membrane of the eye. Causes include: bacterial or viral infection, environmental irritants and allergies. It may also be caused by eye drops that have become contaminated.

Symptoms include: itching, burning, redness and swelling. Treatment may include antibiotic or anti- allergy eye drops.

Contact lens rewetting and eye surface lubrication. If your eyes sometimes feel dry wearing contact lenses, choose eye drops specifically intended for use with contacts. Other drops could discolour your contacts or temporarily change their fit.

Corneal infection (keratitis). Causes may be bacterial or viral. This is the most severe complication of wearing contact lenses. Minor infections may be treated with antibacterial eye drops. More severe infections may also require steroid eye drop treatment. Remove contact lenses immediately if you suspect your eyes are infected.

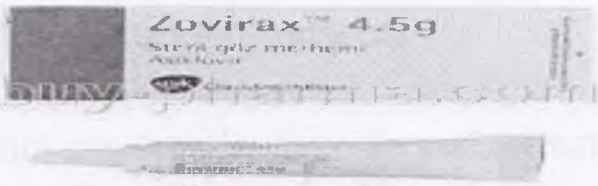


Corneal transplant surgery - replacement of a diseased or scarred cornea with a clear one, (usually from an eye bank). After surgery, eye drops may help healing.

Dry eye (low tear production, common with ageing). Tear 'quality' is determined by the health of each of the three tear-film layers:
The outer, oily layer, which helps prevent moisture evaporation.
A middle, watery layer, which nourishes the eye.

An inner, mucous layer, which helps the middle-layer nutrients enter the cornea.

With poor-quality outer and inner layers, tears don't stay on the eye long enough to lubricate it. This may cause a "sandy" or scratchy feeling.
Other symptoms may include:
Burning or stinging
Pain and redness
Stringy eye discharge
Eyelid heaviness
Vision changes
Excessive tearing, but these 'reflex' tears do not help relieve dry eye, because they don't stay in the eye long enough.



Artificial tears are commonly used to lubricate dry eyes during the day.

Eye allergies (symptoms include eye itching, tearing, redness, watery discharge, stinging and burning). Many different types and brands of eye drops help relieve allergic conjunctivitis symptoms. They include artificial tears, which do not contain medication, and eye drops containing medications such as:
Antihistamines
Mast cell stabilisers
Decongestants
Prescription corticosteroids

Using an eye ointment

Wash your hands well before you use the eye ointment.
Sit or stand in front of a mirror.
Remove the cap from the tube.

Tilt your head back a little and pull the lower lid of your eye out to form a pocket.
Hold the tube upside down near to your eye.
Apply enough pressure to the tube to release a thin line of ointment along the inside of the lower eyelid. Try not to touch your eye as you do this.
Close your eye for a moment or two, and then blink a few times to spread the ointment around the inside of your eye.
Your vision may become a little blurred after you use an eye ointment. If you blink several times after you apply your eye ointment your vision should clear. Try not to rub your eyes.
Repeat the process in your other eye if both eyes are affected.
When you have finished, remember to replace the cap on the tube in order to prevent the ointment from becoming contaminated. Try not to touch the top of the tube.
Some points about eye ointments

Eye ointments are sterile (free from bacteria) before the bottle top is opened. Once it is opened:
Keep the tube closed in a cool, dark place (unless otherwise advised).
Do not let the top of the tube touch your eye, fingers, or any other surface. This is to keep it free from bacteria (germs).
Do not let anyone else use your eye ointment, and do not use anyone else's eye ointment yourself.
Throw out the tube (and get a new one if required) after the recommended time. This is often four weeks after first opening the tube. Never keep opened tubes to use later. There is a risk that the ointment may become infected if it is kept and used for longer than advised. (One tip is to write the date that you opened the tube on the label so you will know when it is time to throw it out.)
Some eye ointments sting or irritate for a short while. Rarely, some people are allergic to some eye ointments. Tell your doctor if eye symptoms become worse after using an eye ointment.

Do not wear contact lenses whilst using eye ointments unless otherwise advised. (Some drugs and preservatives in eye ointments can accumulate in soft contact lenses and may cause harm.)
Keep eye ointments out of children's reach.
Using other eye ointments or drops

If you need to use two eye ointments, you should apply one of the eye ointments as per the instructions above; then, wait about half an hour before you apply the second eye ointment. This is in order to allow enough time for the first eye ointment to be absorbed.

If you have been prescribed an eye drop as well as an eye ointment you should normally apply the eye drop first. Wait five minutes and then apply your eye ointment. Also, see separate leaflet called How to use Eye Drops.

For more detailed information see the leaflet that came with your medicine.