



New Zealand Orthoptic Society Inc.

Information leaflet – Atropine penalisation

Your child has been prescribed Atropine drops to treat amblyopia (lazy eye) where there is reduced vision in one eye. Below are some common questions and answers about the treatment.

Which Eye do I put them in? In your child's _____ eye

Do the drops hurt? Not normally but they may sting on rare occasions.

How do I put them in? With your child lying down and looking up to the ceiling, pull the lower lid down and put a drop in anywhere along the lower lid. If the child is frightened, try putting in the drop when the child is asleep. In some children it is necessary for one adult to hold the child while the other put the drop in. Eventually a routine will be established and it will get easier. Remember to wash your hands before and after putting the drops in.

What are the side effects? Like all drugs children can be allergic to atropine. If you notice any change in health, like of fever, flushing of the skin, light headedness or mood change, stop using the eye drops and notify your orthoptist or your GP. **If your child has a serious reaction please attend your local emergency department.**

How do I store the eye drops? They may be kept at room temperature. Be sure to keep the Atropine drops out of reach of children. If a child swallows Atropine take the child to the emergency department immediately.

I gave a drop of Atropine five days ago and my child's eyes are 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 drop wears off in 1-3 days

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 weaker eye for close work, like reading and writing. Allow the child to hold reading material closer and sit closer to the board at school and let his/her teachers know that they are using Atropine as it may also affect the quality of handwriting.

How long will I need to use Atropine? Treatment duration is dependent on several factors and is different for every child; your orthoptist will discuss your child's individual needs with you.

Should my child wear sunglasses? Outdoors on a sunny day, your child may be more comfortable wearing sunglasses. Children with light coloured eyes are likely to be much more sensitive to the sunlight.

Should I let anyone else know my child is using Atropine? Teachers, family members and child minders should be informed that your child is using Atropine. If your child is admitted to the hospital for any reason please remember to tell the doctors or nurses that your child has used Atropine.

Please do not use the Atropine eye drops on ANYONE else other than the patient that it is prescribed for.

I have run out of drops before the next scheduled appointment with the Orthoptist. What should I do? If you think you are coming to the end of the bottle please ring up and we will send out or you can collect another prescription. Please do not stop the eye drops unless told to do so by the Orthoptist or Ophthalmologist.

If you have any questions or problems please contact us.

Orthoptist name: Contact details: