

How to use your eye drops

Eye drops work in different ways, and to help you use them most effectively please speak to your clinician, nurse or pharmacist to ensure that you understand why you are using your eye drops, how to use your eye drops and when to use your eye drops.

It is essential to use your eye drops as regularly as your clinician has instructed to help treat your condition as effectively as possible.

However, eye drops are not the easiest of medicines to administer, and whether you are administering them to yourself or to another person there are several reasons it can be tricky to put them into the eye.

For instance, patients have reported feeling their arm/hand shaking whilst holding the bottle above their eye and experiencing drops run down their face and into their mouth, leaving an unpleasant taste.

It is important to ensure that you position your eye drop bottle accurately over your eye at a safe distance and angle so the whole drop falls into the eye. This also helps ensure you don't damage your eye surface, or contaminate the nozzle should it touch your eye or surrounding skin.

Wrist-knuckle technique

1. Check the expiry date on your eye drop bottle and shake if required.
2. Wash your hands before opening the bottle.
3. Lie down or sit down and tilt your head back.

4. Make a fist with one hand and use your knuckles to pull your lower eyelid downwards. You can also use your index finger to pull down the lower lid. Place your other hand with the eye drop bottle onto your knuckles.

5. Look up and squeeze one drop into your lower eyelid, making sure the nozzle does not touch your eye, eyelashes or eyelid.

6. Close your eye and press gently on the inner corner of your eye for 30-60 seconds to ensure the drop is fully absorbed.



If this technique is difficult for you to follow, there are several gadgets available called compliance aids, which can help make putting in drops easier.

Please be aware that some eye drops may sting or irritate for a short while after putting them in, but please do let a pharmacist or clinician know if symptoms become worse or if you experience any other side effects.

Top tips when using eye drops

- Wash your hands and shake the bottle before use.
- Never share your eye drops with anyone else.
- Store them as instructed, whether that is at room temperature (never near a radiator) or in the fridge.
- Use your drops only within the expiry date on the bottle, and within the expiry once opened. This is usually 28 days once the bottle is open, but can vary for different eye drop bottles, so always check to ensure they are safe to use. This is to ensure they are not contaminated or have become less effective. It is a good idea to write the date that you open the bottle onto the label so you know when it will expire.
- Order further supplies from your GP before your bottle has finished. This will ensure that you do not run out of drops.
- Use your eye drops at the same time each day, and as evenly spaced out throughout the day as possible.
- Only administer the number of drops advised by your clinician, which is usually just one drop.
- If you feel that you may have missed your eye when instilling a drop, you can safely try again immediately. Any excess volume will simply run out of your eye and will not cause harm to your eye.
- If you are using more than one type of drop in the same eye, remember to leave a five minute gap between drops to allow the first drop to be absorbed. Otherwise, the second drop will wash the first drop out, causing it to have been ineffective.
- If you are using an eye ointment at the same time as your eye drops, always use your eye drops first and leave a five minute gap before using the ointment.
- If applicable, check with your clinician, nurse or pharmacist if you should remove your contact lenses before using your drops.
- If you are having difficulty opening your drop container or bottle, or having difficulty squeezing a drop into your eye, speak to your doctor or pharmacist. Drop administration aids or alternative drop containers/bottles are often available.