

Eye Ointment

● SKILL SNAPSHOT

Purpose

- Places sterile ophthalmic medication in the conjunctival sac for prolonged local contact.

When to use

- Ordered lubrication, antibiotic, anti-inflammatory, or other ocular therapy.

Supplies needed

- Ordered ophthalmic ointment; gloves; tissues/gauze; saline for cleansing if ordered; mirror for teaching.

● PREP + PATIENT SETUP

- Verify medication, concentration, eye, dose/ribbon length, timing, allergies, and contact-lens instructions.
- Assess pain, vision, redness, drainage, and eye condition.

● VAULT TIP

- Ointment goes last because it creates a barrier that can block absorption of drops.

● STEP-BY-STEP

1. Hand hygiene; identify patient; compare medication with MAR/order.
2. Position patient supine or seated with head tilted back and adequate light.
3. Apply gloves if drainage or contact with tears is expected. Clean lids inner to outer with a fresh gauze surface each pass if needed.
4. Ask patient to look up. Gently pull lower lid down to form the conjunctival sac.
5. Hold tube above the sac without touching eye, lashes, lid, skin, or fingers.
6. Apply a thin prescribed ribbon from inner to outer conjunctival sac. Do not place directly on the cornea.
7. Release lid gently. Ask patient to close the eye softly for 1-2 minutes without squeezing or rubbing.
8. Have patient move the closed eye gently to spread ointment if tolerated.
9. Blot excess from inner to outer canthus without pressing on the globe.
10. If drops are also ordered, administer drops first, wait the recommended interval, then apply ointment last.
11. Repeat with clean technique for the other eye if ordered; avoid cross-contamination.
12. Remove gloves, perform hand hygiene, and reassess comfort, vision, and adverse effects.

● SAFETY REMINDERS

- Never touch tube tip to any surface.
- Do not apply pressure to an injured eye or suspected open globe.
- Verify ophthalmic product and correct eye.
- Assist with ambulation until blurred vision clears.

● COMMON MISTAKES

- Putting ointment directly on cornea.
- Applying ointment before eye drops.
- Letting tube tip touch lashes.
- Allowing patient to rub the eye.

● DOCUMENTATION

- Medication, ribbon amount, eye(s), time.
- Pre/post eye assessment and vision if required.
- Sequence with other ophthalmic medications.
- Tolerance and teaching.
- Adverse effects and notifications.