

Atropine penalisation treatment for amblyopia (lazy vision) in children

Information for
carers



What is atropine?

This is a drug which temporarily paralyses some of the muscles inside the eye. This means that the eye cannot focus on things and the pupil cannot constrict making your near (reading) vision blurred.

Why has my child been given atropine?

Atropine is used as a treatment for amblyopia (lazy vision). The aim of atropine treatment is to improve the vision in the eye with amblyopia.

What does it do?

Atropine is put into the 'good' eye which prevents this eye from focussing, causing the vision particularly for near vision to become blurred. This encourages the amblyopic (lazy) eye to work and will help the vision in that eye to develop. Atropine treatment will only work if the drops are put in correctly. It is proven to be successful in improving vision.

The pupil of the eye which has had the drops put in will appear large and dilated because atropine stops it from being able to constrict.

Is this permanent?

No, these are temporary effects of the atropine. Once the treatment has been stopped, the focussing ability of the 'good eye' will return over a day or two. The pupil may remain larger than normal for a few days, or even a few weeks, but all the effects of atropine will wear off.

How is it used?

Atropine must be

- put into the better seeing eye - **one drop only** at each time
- put in twice weekly, usually every Sunday and Wednesday until your next appointment, or as advised. Your dosage may be changed during treatment but you will be informed of this at your appointments

Additional Treatment

Your child should continue to wear glasses that have been prescribed.

Occasionally we supplement atropine treatment with patching or change the glasses lens of the good eye to blur it further.

How often does my child need to be seen?

Your child will be reviewed by the orthoptist every 4-6 weeks. As this is an ongoing treatment for your child, it is important that you keep your appointments with us.

IMPORTANT

- **ONLY PUT THE EYE DROPS INTO THE EYE OF THE CHILD THEY HAVE BEEN PRESCRIBED FOR**
- **ONLY PUT ONE DROP IN THE EYE AT EACH TIME**
- **DO NOT GIVE THE EYE DROPS IN ANY OTHER WAY OR TO ANYONE ELSE**
- **DO NOT INGEST EYE DROPS**

Side-effects

The pupil is enlarged so the eye will be extra sensitive to light. In bright light, your child may be more comfortable wearing a cap or hat and you may like to get them some sunglasses that protect against UV light.

Other rare side-effects include irritation of the eye, a dry mouth, thirst, constipation, vomiting, giddiness, flushing, palpitations, a rash, difficulties urinating or raised pressure inside of the eye. In the rare event of any of these happening, stop the atropine and contact your GP for advice.

Please let the orthoptic department know if you stop the atropine so that we can discuss alternative treatment for your child.

If you have any questions about atropine, amblyopia or your child's treatment, please ask the orthoptist at your next appointment or phone us in normal working hours. We will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Contact details

**Orthoptic Department, St James's University Hospital
(0113) 206 4736 8.30am - 4.30pm**

or email the department on: leedsth-tr.orthoptics@nhs.net

Also available:

Amblyopia treatment - Information for patients, parents and carers (LN002756)

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