

Instilling Eye Drops

This material will help you understand eye drops and how to properly use them.

What are the different types of eye drops?

There are two different kinds of eye drops for patient use: over-the-counter and prescription. You can buy over-the-counter eye drops without a prescription from your doctor, but you still need to use them as directed. Artificial tears are one kind of over-the-counter eye drops, and are used to soothe dry or irritated eyes.

Your doctor may also prescribe steroid eye drops, eye drops to treat infections, or those that treat glaucoma. When using eye drops, you should always follow your doctor's directions and those written on the package.

How do I insert eye drops?

Many people find it easiest to put in their eye drops in front of a mirror. To insert eye drops into your eyes, follow these steps:

1. Before using your eye drops, wash your hands.
2. Remove the cap. Do not touch the tip of the bottle.
3. Slightly tilt your head back.

4. Pull your lower eyelid down with your index finger to make a “pocket” with your lower lid, as seen in Picture 1.
5. Hold the tip of the bottle directly over this “pocket”.
6. While looking up, let the eye drop fall into the “pocket”. (Do not touch the bottle to your eye or eyelid.)
7. Close your eyes.
8. Using your finger, apply pressure where the lids meet the nose with your eyes closed, as seen in Picture 2. Hold the pressure for 1-3 minutes. This step is very important – to make sure your eye gets the correct amount of medication.
9. Wipe any extra drops and tears from the closed lids or cheek with a tissue, as seen in Picture 3.
10. Open your eyes.



Picture 1



Picture 2



Picture 3

Wait at least five minutes before inserting any other kind of eye medication so that you are not washing one eye drop out with another. This is true for prescription medication as well as for over-the-counter eye drop medication.

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<http://www.uofmhealth.org/health-library/za1098#za1099>

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