

Lubricants/artificial tears

Examples: Viscotears® (Carbomer 980), Celluvisc® (Carmellose), Hypromellose, Sno Tears® (Polyvinyl Alcohol), Ilube® (Acetylcysteine), Lacrilube® ointment and Simple eye ointment

How do they work?

Lubricant eye drops/ointments are used to treat dry and irritated eyes and sometimes to help the eye to heal. They work in various ways – most simply wet or moisturise the eyes, others can remove excess tear mucus made by the eye. Sometimes, eyes with a dry surface can appear watery, which occurs when dryness is caused by the tear film not clinging to the eye.

What should I tell the pharmacist or doctor?

Tell the pharmacist or doctor if your child is allergic to any antibiotic or other medication.

How to give eye drops/ointment

Before giving either drops or ointment, it is important to wash and dry your hands.

Eye drops: You only need to place one drop in each eye. If you need to give more than one type of eye drop, leave at least five minutes between applying each type of medicine.

Eye ointment: Pull down the lower lid and squeeze about 1/2 a centimetre (1/4 of an inch) of ointment into each eye. You need to take care not to touch the eye with the end of the tube.

Contact lenses: should be removed before putting in eye drops. Wait 15 minutes before putting the contact lenses back in the eye. Check with the pharmacist that the eye drops or ointment are safe to use with contact lenses.

How often should I give lubricants?

Some drops are watery and others are thicker like a gel or cream. Watery eye drops can be used many times during the day, whereas thicker eye drops are used less often, usually one to four times a day.

Often the drops are to be used 'when required', which means the eye drops should be used whenever your child feels his/her eyes are itchy, red or irritated. As a suggestion, this can be up to four or six times a day. If the drops are used more frequently, contact your doctor to prescribe a preservative-free eye preparation, as frequent use of eye drops with preservatives can irritate the eyes.

What are the main side effects?

Mild side effects: Eye drops and ointment can cause mild stinging, blurred sight or a funny taste in the mouth soon after putting them in.

Occasionally, the drops can cause an allergic reaction with redness, swelling and irritation of the eye or eyelids.

If your child experiences symptoms that you think might be due to the drops, speak to your pharmacist or doctor.

How do you store these drops?

Most eye drops/ointments can be stored at room temperature and should be thrown away four weeks after you open them. Some need to be stored in a fridge and some need to be thrown away after one week. Other single-dose preparations are discarded after single use. Check with your pharmacist when you need to discard the medication.

Do not use medicines after the expiry date written on the packaging.

Need more information?

Please refer to the packaging and product leaflet for further information or contact the pharmacy department on: 020 7566 2362

Moorfields Eye Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

City Road, London EC1V 2PD

Ph: 020 7253 3411 www.moorfields.nhs.uk

Moorfields Direct telephone helpline

Phone: 020 7566 2345

Monday to Friday 09.00 to 16.30 for further information and advice.