

## Patient information – general

# How to use your eye ointment

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

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

However, eye ointments 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 mentioned difficulty in using eye drops after administering ointment and experiencing the drops run down their face. Patients have also reported having an unpleasant taste in their mouth after using their eye

ointment as well as having blurry vision for some time afterwards.

It is important to ensure that you position your eye ointment tube accurately over your eye at a safe distance and angle so the ointment can be applied effectively from the nozzle 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.

Together with our patients, we have developed the popular 'wrist-knuckle' technique to help make applying eye ointment easier and safer. Please read the step by step guide below for more information.

### Wrist-knuckle technique

1. If you need to use eye drops(s) and eye ointment, use the eye drops first and then wait five minutes before using the eye ointment.

2. Check the expiry date on your eye ointment and wash your hands before opening the tube.
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. Place your other hand with the eye ointment tube onto your knuckles with the nozzle facing downwards towards your eye (see figure 1).
5. Look up and squeeze about 1cm of the ointment along the inside of the lower eyelid, making sure the nozzle does not touch the eye, eyelashes or eyelid.
6. Close your eye for a moment, then blink a few times to spread the ointment around the inside of the eye.

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



**Figure 1: Wrist-knuckle technique**

### Top tips when using eye ointments

- Wash your hands before use.
- Never share your eye ointment with anyone else.
- Store them as instructed for example at room temperature (never near a radiator).
- Use your ointment only within the expiry date on the tube, and within the expiry once opened. This is usually 28 days once the tube is open, but can vary for different eye ointments, 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 tube onto the label so you know when it will expire.

- Try not to squeeze the tube too hard to avoid too much ointment coming out.
- Order further supplies from your GP before your ointment has finished. This will ensure that you do not run out of ointment. Please note: Moorfields does not issue repeat prescriptions. These will be issued by your GP at your request if required.
- Use your eye ointment at the same time each day, and as evenly spaced out throughout the day as possible.
- If you are using an eye ointment at the same time as your eye drop, always use your eye drop first and leave a five minute gap before using the ointment.
- Remove your contact lenses before using your ointment, unless advised otherwise by your clinician.

### **Need further advice?**

We are always very happy to help you with administering your eye ointment. For more information:

Watch a video tutorial on best techniques for administering eye preparations on the Moorfields Eye Hospital YouTube channel:

[www.youtube.com/moorfieldseye](http://www.youtube.com/moorfieldseye)

Follow our #KnowYourDrops campaign which is run by Moorfields pharmacy to support patients and their carers with administering eye drops and ointments effectively. Follow us on social media to find out when our next free drop-in session will be taking place at various sites.

Twitter: @moorfields  
#knowyourdrops

Email:  
[knowyourdrops@moorfields.nhs.uk](mailto:knowyourdrops@moorfields.nhs.uk)

Webpage:  
<http://www.moorfields.nhs.uk/knowyourdrops>

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**Moorfields Direct telephone helpline**

Phone: 020 7566 2345

Monday to Friday, 8.30am–9pm

Saturday, 9am–5pm

Information and advice on eye conditions  
and treatments from experienced  
ophthalmic-trained nurses.