

Your treatment with interferon eye drops

Please read this leaflet carefully before starting your interferon eye drops as it contains important advice on the safe handling, administration and disposal of the eye drops. This leaflet also aims to answer frequently asked questions some patients may have.

Please note that interferon is not licensed for use as an eye drop, but it has been used within specialist eye clinics for many years with good effect. Always take this medicine exactly as your doctor has told you and check with your doctor or pharmacist if you are not sure. You should also have been provided with another leaflet with more general information about unlicensed medicines.

Why do I need interferon eye drops?

Your eye doctor has prescribed these eye drops specifically for your eye condition. Interferon α -2b has been shown to have anti-tumour properties. It aims to slow down or stop the division of the abnormal cells on the surface of your eye.

Are the eye drops suitable for everyone?

No. You should tell your doctor if you:

- have had an unusual or allergic reaction to interferon α -2b and/or benzyl alcohol.
- are pregnant or trying to become pregnant.
- are breastfeeding.

Information about interferon eye drops:

The eye drops will be specially ordered for you as they have a short shelf-life. The drops will be supplied to you on a regular basis by Moorfields pharmacy. At times, new bottles of the eye drops may not be ready to collect and you might miss a few doses. Any missed doses are unlikely to have an effect on the outcome of your treatment if you have been using the eye drops regularly.

Possible side effects

You may experience common side effects such as slight redness, irritation, and pain in your eye and possibly an increased sensitivity to light (photophobia) during the course of treatment. These side effects may persist whilst using the eye drops and will resolve once treatment is complete.



You should seek medical advice if you experience any of the following symptoms:

- severe or persistent redness of the eye/eyelids.
- itching or swelling of the eyelids.
- severe intolerance to bright light.
- prolonged irritation or pain.
- fever, headaches or tiredness which coincides with the start of your treatment.

How should I store my eye drops?

Interferon eye drops should be kept in a container and stored in the refrigerator (between 2°C and 8°C) away from food. Keep the eye drops in the bottle which they were already supplied in. You should throw away interferon eye drops one week after opening. Do not use your eye drops after the expiry date shown on the bottle. All medications should be locked away so children can't reach them. If you have been given more than one bottle, the label on the eye drop bottle may be numbered. Use the bottle with the lowest number first as they may have different expiry dates. If there are no numbers on the label, then the bottles can be used in any order. Remember to only open one bottle each week and write the date of opening onto the bottle label.

Using your eye drops

Wash and dry your hands before handling the eye drops.
Remove the bottle from the refrigerator. Using the dropper, draw up a small amount of liquid from the eye drop

bottle, gently shake off any excess liquid on the dropper back into the bottle.

Tilt your head back and gently pull down the lower eyelid to form a pocket. Using the dropper, instil one drop into the pocket, taking care not to touch the eye, the skin around the eye or your fingers with the end of the dropper. Replace the dropper cap and close the bottle without delay.

Wait a few seconds to allow the drop to disperse and then release the eyelid. Close your eyes for 30 seconds and press gently on the inner corner of the eye by the nose with your finger.

If any of the drops fall on your cheek, immediately wipe them away with a tissue and then wash the affected area with warm water and soap.

Place the bottle back into the refrigerator. Wash your hands with soap and water. Should you need to use other eye drops at the same time of day, leave an interval of at least five minutes between them to prevent one eye drop from diluting the other.

How to deal with interferon eye drop spillages

Any spillages should be dealt with immediately to minimise any accidental contact. Wipe the spillage up using paper towels or tissue, and ensure that as much liquid as possible has been soaked up. The affected area should then be washed using warm soapy water. Affected clothing or bedding should be removed as soon as possible



and washed separately from other items.

The used paper towels or tissues can be discarded as normal household waste.

How to dispose of interferon eye drops

Empty bottles can be thrown away in the household waste. Make sure the dropper is replaced firmly back into the bottle. Part-used bottles should be returned to the hospital pharmacy or your local community pharmacy for disposal. Do not throw any remaining liquid down the toilet or sink.

Useful contacts

Pharmacy high cost drugs team:

Open Monday to Friday, 9am - 5.30pm

Phone: 0207 566 2360

Email:

moorfields.pharmacyhighcostdrugs@nhs.net

Main pharmacy:

Open Monday to Friday 9am – 9pm,

Saturday 9am - 7pm

Phone: 0207 566 2362

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Moorfields Eye Hospital NHS

Foundation Trust

City Road, London EC1V 2PD

Phone: 020 7253 3411

www.moorfields.nhs.uk

Moorfields Direct telephone helpline

Phone: 020 7566 2345

Monday-Friday, 8.30am-9pm

Saturday, 9am-5pm

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

Patient advice and liaison service (PALS)

Phone: 020 7566 2324/ 020 7566 2325

Email: moorfields.pals@nhs.net

Moorfields' PALS team provides confidential advice and support to help you with any concerns you may have about the care we provide, guiding you through the different services available at Moorfields. The PALS team can also advise you on how to make a complaint.

Your right to treatment within 18 weeks

Under the NHS constitution, all patients have the right to begin consultant-led treatment within 18 weeks of being referred by their GP. Moorfields is committed to fulfilling this right, but if you feel that we have failed to do so, please contact our patient advice and liaison service (PALS) who will be able to advise you further (see above). For more information about your rights under the NHS constitution, visit www.nhs.uk/choiceinthenhs

