

Eye Drops

Patient Information

Names of eye drops: generic name versus brand name

Many medicines including eye drops have at least two different names:

- **The brand name** – created by the pharmaceutical company that made the medicine
- **The generic name** - the name of the active ingredient(s) in the medicine.

Generic eye drops are usually more cost-effective (cheaper) than branded ones, so you may be prescribed a generic drop in place of a branded drop as this is better value for the NHS. However, there will be some instances when prescribing by brand will be most cost-effective for the NHS and your doctor may prescribe a branded drop in place of a generic drop. It is unlikely to make a difference to you whether your eye drop is prescribed as a branded drop or a generic drop because they both contain the same active ingredient(s), but if you find your eye reacts differently, please speak to the prescriber.

Depending on the company producing the eye drops the bottle may look quite different. If you find that one shape of eye drop bottle is easier for you to use, please inform your pharmacist so that they can try to supply you with a similar type of bottle for future prescriptions. If you are having difficulties putting the drops into your eye you can discuss this with your pharmacist or optician who will be able to give you advice and offer you possible solutions such as a small device to help you put your drops in.

Storage Requirements

Depending on the company producing the eye drop, the storage requirements may vary. It is therefore important that you refer to your eye drop container to ensure that your eye drops are stored appropriately and not used after the date shown on the label.

Using your eye drops

- If you are using more than one type of drop in the same eye, remember to leave a five minute gap between drops to allow the first drop to be absorbed. Otherwise, the second drop will wash the first drop out, causing it to have been ineffective.
- If you are using an eye ointment at the same time as your eye drops, always use your eye drops first and leave a five minute gap before using the ointment.
- If applicable, check with the prescriber whether you should remove your contact lenses before using your drops.

How to put your drops in

- 1) First, wash your hands. Then, if it says so on the bottle, shake it.
- 2) Get into a comfortable position. You may find it easiest to sit in front of a mirror, or you could lie down. There are several different methods that you could use to instil your eye drops. Choose a method that suits you best (see below for details).
- 3) Immediately after putting your drop in, close your eye and press gently on the corner of the eye by your nose, for around one minute. This is called punctal occlusion. It blocks the tear duct, meaning the drop stays in the eye where it can do most good. If you don't do this, the drop can drain down the tear duct and into your throat, where it might cause an unpleasant taste or some side-effects.
- 4) If you feel that you may have missed your eye when instilling a drop, you can safely try again at once. Any excess volume will simply run out of your eye and will not cause harm to your eye.

Methods of Administration

Standing at a mirror

Pull down your lower lid with a finger of one hand, to create a 'pocket'. With the other hand, squeeze or tap the bottle so one drop goes into your eye, into the pocket created by pulling down the lower lid.



Lying Down

If you're lying down, you may find it easier to balance the bottle on the bridge of your nose. Look upwards and squeeze the bottle. The drop should fall into your eye. If it doesn't, it will be in the corner by your nose. Turn your head slightly to the side and the drop should run into your eye.



Wrist on knuckle (WOK)

The WOK technique is particularly helpful in holding the bottle steady or if you have long nails:

- Make a fist with one hand and place on your cheek.
- Pull down your lower lid with your knuckle, to create the pocket.
- With the other hand, hold your bottle upside down. Rest this hand on your fist.
- The bottle should be above your eye. Squeeze or tap the bottle so the drop lands in the pocket you have made with your fist.



References

- Medicines Information- brand name versus generic [Medicines information - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](#)
- Moorfields eye Hospital NHS Foundation Trust Patient Information Leaflet how to use your eye drops [How to use your eye drops.pdf \(moorfields.nhs.uk\)](#)
- Glaucoma UK [Eye Drops | How to Use Eye Drops | Glaucoma Treatments | Glaucoma UK](#)