

# Using Eyedrops and Ointments Correctly









Sometimes your doctor of optometry may prescribe eyedrops or ointments for certain eye conditions, infections or diseases. By understanding the proper methods of using and storing these medications, you can assist in the course of treatment prescribed by your optometrist.

Before you leave your optometrist's office, make sure that you fully understand the type of medication you are to use, how and when to apply it, and how to store it. Remember to tell your doctor of optometry about any other prescription and nonprescription medications you are using and any allergies that you have.

Be sure to follow all of the eyedrop or ointment instructions given by your optometrist; altering or skipping the recommended usage may effect the health of your eyes, your vision, and/or your comfort. If you experience any side-effects (such as burning, inflammation, puffiness, itching, etc.), call your optometrist immediately for further instruction.

## General tips

-  New packages of eyedrops and ointments should be sealed; if a package shows any sign of tampering, return it promptly.
-  Before using, check the bottle or tube to make sure you have the correct medication in hand and that the expiration date has not passed.
-  Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water before using eyedrops or ointments.
-  Recap medications promptly to avoid contamination.
-  Store eyedrops and ointments in a dark, cool, dry place or according to your optometrist's directions. Keep all medicine out of the reach of children.
-  Never share eyedrops, ointments or cosmetics with other people. Sharing can result in infections and inappropriate use of these items.



American Optometric  
Association

# Using Eyedrops and Ointments Correctly

## Using eyedrops

- Look at the ceiling by standing or sitting and tilting your head backward. Some people prefer to lie down on a flat surface.

### Form a pocket in the lower lid.



- Gently pull the skin of your lower eye-lid between your thumb and index finger to create a “pocket” for the drop.
- If you are unable to master this, gently pull your lower lid down with your index finger.
- Look up (so you are not looking directly at the bottle) and gently release a drop into the pocket of

your eye. Keep the bottle’s nozzle or the eyedropper clean by not touching it to any part of your eye or face.

- If you are unable to get the drop into your eye because of blinking, try this: Close your eye and pull the lower lid down. Aim the drop into the inside corner of your eye. Open your eye and let the drop run into your lower lid. (Be sure to try the open-eye method again at your next scheduled dose as it is a more reliable way to ensure the drop remains in your eye.)

### Perform occlusion by pressing inside corners for three minutes.



👁️ To help keep the medication in your eye and prevent it from escaping through the tear duct, your doctor of optometry may instruct you to “occlude” this duct by gently pressing on the inside corner of your closed eye with your index finger for about three minutes.

👁️ If drops have been placed in both eyes, you can perform occlusion by placing your thumb and index finger (or the index fingers of both hands) on either side of your nose and gently pressing down on the inside corners of both closed eyes.

👁️ This step is very important with some medications, so do not skip it if your optometrist has requested it.

👁️ Gently blot your closed eyes with a tissue to wipe away any excess drops.

👁️ If you use more than one kind of drop, wait at least five minutes between drops.

## Using ointments

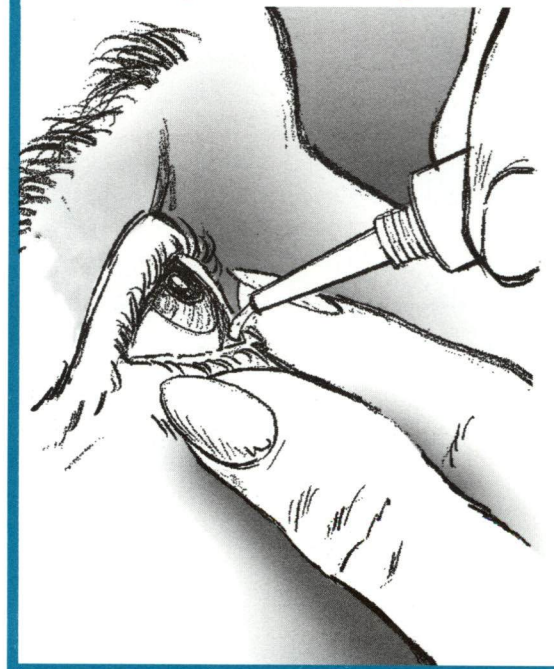
👁️ Ointments are usually applied directly to the eye’s surface or to the edges of the eye lid (the margin). Before using an ointment, ask your optometrist how, where, and how often to apply it.

👁️ It is a good idea to have the doctor or an assistant demonstrate the proper procedure for applying your specific medication.

👁️ Begin by expressing and discarding a 1/4 inch of ointment from the tube at each use. This will help ensure that the ointment used is clean and fresh.

👁️ If applying to the eye’s surface, form a “pocket” (see the section on using eyedrops) and express a 1/4 to 1/2-inch strip of ointment into the pocket.

**Place ointment on an open eye on the exposed, lower portion.**



👁️ A twist of your wrist will break the strip of ointment from the tube.

Place ointment on closed eyes  
near the base of the lashes.



After placing the ointment in your eyes, blink or close your eyes briefly. Your body heat will melt the ointment and allow it to spread across the surface of your eyes.

If applying ointment to the edges of the eyelids, express about a 1/2-inch of strip of ointment onto your finger and glide it across the length of your closed lids near the base of the lashes.

Using a tissue, remove any excess ointment from the skin around your eyes taking care not to disturb the ointment placed in your eyes or on the edges of your lids.

When using a combination of eyedrops and ointment, your optometrist will usually recommend that you apply the eyedrops first, wait ten minutes and apply the ointment.

---

Compliments of:

 **FAMILY VISION CORNER**  
STEVEN J. TRZEPACZ, O.D.  
223 East Main Street  
Streator, IL 61364  
815-673-1591



American Optometric Association  
243 North Lindbergh Blvd. • St. Louis, MO 63141

VL4/897



Printed in U.S.A.