



Atropine 1% drops for refraction

This leaflet gives instructions and advice on using the atropine drops given to you for your child's next appointment. The drops are necessary to dilate the pupils and relax the focusing of your child's eyes to allow an accurate glasses test to be performed.

You have an appointment for refraction (glasses test) at the Orthoptic Department on

_____ at _____

Your child will require:

Atropine Sulphate 1% preservative-free eye drops:

One drop to be used in each eye twice a day (morning and evening) for 3 days before the appointment.

DO NOT USE THE EYE DROPS ON THE DAY OF THE APPOINTMENT.

Atropine is for external use only

How to use the eye drops

- Wash your hands and gently pull down the lower lid of your child's eye.
- Peel the paper backing off the sachet and pull the lid off the plastic tube.
- Lay or sit your child so that their head is tilted backwards slightly.
- Open your child's eyes and squeeze the tube fairly hard to release a drop – aim for the outer white part of the eye.
- After using Atropine, close the eyelid and gently press the inner corner of your child's eye with your finger for 2 minutes. This will help to keep the Atropine in the eye.
- Children should be carefully monitored for 30 minutes after giving the drops. If drops land / run outside the eye, they should be washed away immediately.

Moorfields Eye Hospital has a useful video demonstrating administering eye drops to children effectively. Visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d3wtEWX7HxU>

Side effects of using eye drops

Side effects are rare but include a hot flushed appearance, a sore red eye, an upset stomach, raised temperature, hot dry skin, sickness, and rarely, palpitations (thumping heart beats), faster or an irregular heartbeat.

If your child shows any of these rare signs, do not use any more Atropine drops and ring the Orthoptics Department on **0118 322 7169 option 1** followed by **option 2** so that we can make alternative arrangements for your child's appointment.

If a problem occurs, stop using the Atropine immediately and seek advice from your GP or the NHS Helpline 111. If your child is very unwell, immediately seek help by going to your local emergency department (A&E).

Common undesirable effects are photosensitivity (sensitivity to light), local irritation and visual disturbance – see below.

What to expect after the test

- Atropine dilates the pupils for up to 2 weeks.
- **It is useful to bring sunglasses or a peaked cap to wear outside; your child will be sensitive to bright sunlight until the pupils of the eye have returned to their normal size.**
- Atropine also relaxes the focusing muscles for 10-14 days, so your child may not be able to see detailed close objects clearly.
- If your child is at school, they can go back to school the same day but explain to the teacher that detailed close work may be difficult for the next week.

How to store Atropine

- Keep this medicine out of the sight and reach of children.
- This medicine does not require any special storage conditions.
- Do not use this medicine after the expiry date, which is stated on the carton after EXP. The expiry date refers to the last day of that month.
- Use within 28 days after first opening.
- Keep the bottle tightly closed.

Important advice

- **If your child has an accident and is seen by a clinician, you must tell them that your child has recently had Atropine eye drops.**
- If you have any questions please ring **0118 322 7169 option 1** followed by **option 2**, Monday to Friday between 8.30am and 4.30pm.

Orthoptics Department
Level 2 Eye Block, Royal Berkshire Hospital

To find out more about our Trust visit www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Please ask before your appointment if you need this information in another language or format.

RBFT Orthoptics Department, July 2026. Next review due: July 2028