

Step 1: Read your doctor's instructions

The timing and dosage of your eye drops can make a big difference in your treatment. Whether you're using drops for glaucoma, dry eye, an infection or an allergy, you must use the drops correctly to get the full benefit. If you're having trouble getting the drops in or using them on the right schedule, talk to your ophthalmologist about your options.

- Use your drops exactly when and how your doctor tells you to.
- If you need to take more than one type of eye drop at the same time, wait 3 to 5 minutes between the different kinds of medication.
- Ask your ophthalmologist or pharmacist if it's OK to keep the drops in the refrigerator. When the drops are cold it might be easier to feel the drop when it hits the eye, so you can tell where the drop has landed.

Step 2: Get prepared

- Always wash your hands before handling your eye drops or touching your eyes.
- If you're wearing contact lenses, take them out — unless your ophthalmologist has told you to leave them in.
- Shake the drops vigorously before using them.
- Remove the cap of the eye drop medication but **do not touch the dropper tip**. If you do, the dropper could pick up bacteria from your fingers and contaminate the bottle of medication.

Step 3: Place the drops into your eye

- Tilt your head back slightly and look up. Some people find it helpful to focus on a specific point on the ceiling. It might help to tape a photo or clipping from a magazine to the ceiling, so that your eyes can focus on it.
- Use one hand to pull your lower eyelid down, away from the eye. This forms a pocket to catch the drop.
- Hold the dropper tip directly over the eyelid pocket.
- **Don't touch the bottle to your eye or eyelid.** This can give bacteria or other contaminants a chance to grow in your eye drops.
- Squeeze the bottle gently and let the eye drop fall into the pocket.

If you're too anxious to insert eye drops

Children and people who have strong reactions to anything near their eyes may struggle to keep their eyes open. If that's the case, try this method instead:

- Lean your head back as far as is comfortable, or lay down on a bed or couch.
- Keep your eyes closed.
- Hold the eye drop bottle with your thumb and first two fingers.
- Put the other two fingers of your hand on your nose for stability.
- Without touching the bottle to your eyelid, put an eye drop in the corner of your eye near your nose.
- While your head is still tilted back, open your eyes and blink several times until the drop rolls into the eye.

If you're still having trouble

- If possible, ask a family member, neighbor or friend to help you insert the drops using the alternate method described above.
- Ask your doctor about eye drop assistance devices. These devices can help you aim the drop, squeeze the bottle and keep your eye open.

Step 4: Close your eyes and don't blink!

- Apply gentle pressure to your tear ducts, where the eyelid meets the nose. Hold the tear ducts closed for a minute or two—or as long as your ophthalmologist recommends—before opening your eyes. This will give the drop time to be absorbed by the eye, instead of draining into your nose.
- If any drops leaked out, use a tissue to wipe them from your closed eyelids.
- Repeat steps 3 and 4 with the other eye, if necessary.

Step 5: Wash your hands

It's important to wash your hands with soap and water after handling medication and touching your face.

References

Gudgel, Dan T. "How to Put in Eye Drops." *American Academy of Ophthalmology*, 10 Mar. 2021, <https://www.aao.org/eye-health/treatments/how-to-put-in-eye-drops>.