

Administration of Eye Preparations with Preservatives in Care Home Setting

Manufacturers are required to produce eye preparations that must have effective antimicrobial preservation for at least 28 days once opened. The risk of infection to people from eye drops / ointments is more likely to occur from the environment and / or poor administration techniques rather than the eye preparation. Most eye preparations have a 28-day expiry after opening but some newer preparations have a longer expiry – always check the manufacturer's guidance.

Care Home staff must take responsibility to ensure that safe practices and procedures are used when administering eye preparations to keep the risk of microbial contamination as low as possible. This is part of clinical governance.

Instructions for using eye drops or ointments

1. Follow the **six** rights of drugs administration.
2. Check the MAR chart, obtain the correct eye drops and confirm the eye drop label against MAR.
3. Explain the procedure to the person.
4. Wash your hands and put on the gloves
5. Shake the bottle, unscrew the lid putting it somewhere clean, being careful not to touch the inner side of the cap.
6. **Eye drops:** Ask the person to tilt head back slightly and look up. Then use one hand to pull lower eyelid down away from eye, hold dropper tip directly over eyelid pocket, squeeze bottle gently and let eye drop fall into pocket in lower eye.
7. **Eye ointment:** Apply a small amount of ointment along the **INSIDE** of the lower eyelid and ask the person to blink to help spread over the cornea.
8. **The nozzle of the bottle / tube should not come into contact with the eye.**
9. Ask the person to close their eyes for approximately 30 seconds
10. **DO NOT RUB THE EYE.** Blot around the eye using a tissue to remove any excess liquid.
11. Remove the gloves and wash hands.
12. Record the route, site, and the administration onto the MAR chart.



Some eye drops need to be kept refrigerated, check the label or with your supplying pharmacy.

Multiple drug treatment

If the person needs more than one drop, allow five minutes between each drop.

If there is a mixture of drops and ointments: instil drops first and then ointment after 4-5 minutes.

How much is needed per month?

BOTTLES*

On average a drop is about 0.05mL (there are about 20 drops per mL)

DOSAGE	mL's required per month (one eye)	mL's required per month (both eyes)
1 drop once daily	2mL	4mL
1 drop twice daily	3mL	6mL
1 drop three times daily	5mL	10mL
1 drop four times daily	6mL	12mL

* The BNF does not specify that separate bottles are required; only advises separate eye bottles for each eye if treating an infective eye disease.

UHCW currently operates a policy of single bottle use for both eyes and only uses separate bottles for antibiotics where necessary.

UNIT DOSE**

If both eyes need treating, the same unit dose can be used, if there is no infection present in either eye.

DOSAGE	Unit dose required per month (one eye only)	Unit dose required per month (both eyes)
1 drop once daily	28	28
1 drop twice daily	56	56
1 drop three times daily	84	84
1 drop four times daily	112	112

** In the event of an eye infection, one-unit dose should be used per eye to avoid cross contamination

References:

Joint Formulary Committee. *British National Formulary*. 59th ed. London: British Medical Association and Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain; 2009.

Personal communication Pharmacy Department UHCW. 24.06. 10

Eye drugs – Prescribing and administering, Patient.co.uk: patient.info/doctor/eye-drugs-prescribing-and-administering

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Clinical Commissioning Group – Eye Drop and Single Dose eye preparation quantities, Feb 2018