This information was prepared by your nursing staff to show you how to apply eye drops. By following these directions, you will keep this medication clean and prevent eye infections.

Special note: Please double check that the:

- label on the bottle and only use the eye drops that are prescribed for you
- number of drops that you must use and how often to apply the drops.
- bottle’s expiration date. **Throw it away if it is expired.**

**Do not put any medication into your eyes unless the label says “ophthalmic”**.

1. Wash your hands thoroughly using soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Dry your hands with a clean towel. Use that clean towel to turn off the faucets.

   ![Figure 1: NIH Clinical Center Nursing Dept.](image1)

   If your eyes are crusted or have drainage, close your eyes and gently wash or wipe your eyes from the inner edge (nose side) to the outer edge using a separate, clean, wet cotton ball for each eye.

2. Shake the eye drop container gently. Remove the cap of the eye drop bottle. Place the cap on its side, and rest it on a clean tissue.

   ![Figure 2: NIH Clinical Center Nursing Dept.](image2)
3. Do not touch the bottle tip with your hand or any object. It must stay clean.

4. Turn the bottle upside down.

5. Place the back of your thumb against your forehead, above the eye receiving the drop.

6. Tilt your head backward with both eyes open, and look at a point on the ceiling.

7. Pull your lower lid down gently to form a pocket for the drop. Position the tip of the eye drop bottle so it does not come closer than ¾ inch above your lower lid.

8. Squeeze the bottle lightly to allow the drop to fall into the pocket.
9. Close your eyes without squeezing them. Keep your eyes closed, and gently blot them with a clean tissue.

10. With your eyes closed, gently press on the inner part of your eye for 30 seconds. This keeps the medication in contact with the eye longer.

11. Replace the cap on the eye drop bottle.

**Helpful Tips:**

- Ask your nurse or doctor to watch you apply your eye drops to make sure you are doing it right.
- Ask your doctor or nurse why you need the eye drops, what are the possible side effects, and when to contact your doctor.
- Do not wear contact lenses while using eye drops or ointments unless your doctor instructs you to do so.
- If your doctor has ordered eye drops and eye ointment, apply the eye drops before applying the ointment.
- Make sure you use the correct eye drops — ask for help if you need it.
- Avoid touching the eye bottle tip with your fingers or touching your eye, eyelashes, or eyelid.
- Turn the bottle upside-down quickly to keep drops from leaking out.
- You may find it easier to apply your eye drops in front of a mirror or lying flat on your back.
- Point your fingernail away from your eye, to prevent scratching your eye.
- Open both eyes and focus on the ceiling to avoid blinking.
- Avoid squeezing or blinking your eyes after applying eye drops.
• To blot excess eye drops from the eyes, use a separate and clean tissue for each eye.
• Wait at least 2 - 5 minutes between applying each drop of the same eye medication.
• If you have more than one eye medications, wait for at least 5 minutes between using different eye drops.
• Please review your specific medication instructions.

This information is prepared specifically for persons taking part in clinical research at the National Institutes of Health Clinical Center and may not apply to patients elsewhere. If you have questions about the information presented here, talk to a member of your health care team.

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