

# Dilating Eye Drops for Children and Babies

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This patient information provides information to parents, carers and guardians of children being seen in the eye clinic who require their eyes dilating.

The optometrist your child is seeing today has requested that their eyes be dilated with eye drops. This allows the optometrist to examine the back of the eye and also to assess whether glasses are needed. If your child already wears glasses the optometrist will check whether an updated prescription is needed.

The effect of the drops is to widen the pupil (the black part) of your child's eyes. The drops to dilate your child's eyes are typically effective for 10 to 12 hours. However, every child is different and the drops can sometimes take over 24 hours to wear off. If your child wakes up in the morning still with large pupils, please do not be alarmed as the drops will continue to wear off.

Dilated pupils will make it harder for your child to focus on near objects. This means that books, games, toys, TVs and tablets will all be more difficult to see. Because of this inability to focus, your child may also be clumsier than normal. Distance vision is affected much less than near vision. If the day is particularly bright, your child may benefit from wearing sunglasses.

Your child can return to school or nursery with dilated pupils as long as you and the school/nursery are happy for them to do so.

There is no medical reason why they cannot return to school/nursery.

Before the instillation of the eye drops, the optometrist will ask you:

- The child's full name
- The child's date of birth
- Whether your child has any allergies to medications that you are aware of
- Whether your child has had the dilating drops before

To instil the drops your child needs to be encouraged to look up to the ceiling and keep their eyes open. Young children are best sitting on a parent/carers lap and babies are best cradled in a parent/carers arms or laid down in their pram. The optometrist will attempt to put a drop into each eye with as little delay as possible between each one. Your child may find that the eye drops sting. This stinging wears off in 20 to 30 seconds and has been likened to getting soap or shampoo in the eyes.

The drops take 20 to 30 minutes to reach full effect. If after 10 minutes your child's eyes are not dilating equally or not dilating at all please inform one of the orthoptic team. It may be that the drops did not make contact with the surface of the eye and

they need to be repeated. If you wish to leave the clinic whilst your child's eyes dilate, please inform one of the orthoptic team.

You have the right to refuse instillation of eye drops to your child. However, it should be noted that this may mean the optometrist is unable to perform a full examination of your child's eyes or provide updated glasses if needed. You are encouraged to discuss any concerns with a member of the orthoptic team seeing you today.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask a member of the orthoptic team.

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