

Eye Drops (How to Use Them Safely)

Infections, inflammation, glaucoma, and many other eye disorders are treated with eye drops. Surprisingly, even the small amount of medication in an eye drop can create significant side effects in other parts of the body. It is important to remember that all medicines have side effects, even eye drops! There are ways to decrease the absorption of the eye drop into the system, and to increase the time the eye drop is on the eye, making the medicine more safe and effective.

Inserting eye drops may seem difficult at first, but it becomes easier with practice. To put in an eye drop, tilt the head back. Then create a pocket in front of the eye by pulling the lower lid down with an index finger or gently pinch the lower lid outward with the thumb and index finger. Let the drop fall into the pocket without allowing the bottle to touch your eye or eyelid (to prevent contamination of the bottle).

Immediately after instilling the drop, squeeze the bridge of your nose for two to three minutes with your thumb and forefinger. This prevents most of the drop from traveling down the tear duct to the rest of your body.

Keep your eyes closed for three to five minutes after instilling the drop. Because the volume of a single drop exceeds the capacity of the surface of the eye, it serves no purpose to use two drops at the same time.

Before opening your eyes, dab unabsorbed drops and tears from the closed lids with a tissue. If you are taking two different kinds of eye drops, wait at least five minutes before instilling the second drop.