

## 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. Therefore the risk of infection to patients from eye drops / ointments is more likely to occur from the environment and / or poor administration techniques rather than the eye preparation. Discard bottles 28 days after opening.

Care Home staff must take responsibility to ensure that safe practices and procedures are used when administering eye preparations in order 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 five rights of drugs administration.
2. Check the MAR chart, obtain the correct eye drops.
3. Explain the procedure to the patient.
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:** Instruct the patient to look up and squeeze the amount of medication as prescribed into the centre of the conjunctival sac.
7. **Eye ointment:** Apply a small amount of ointment along the **INSIDE** of the lower eyelid and blink to help spread over the cornea.
8. Instruct the patient to close their eyes for approximately 30 seconds
9. Wipe any excess liquid using a tissue or cotton wool.
10. Remove the gloves and wash hands.
11. Record the route, site and the administration onto the MAR chart.

Good practice should ensure that the nozzle of the bottle / tube does not come into contact with the eye.

One bottle/tube should normally last one patient - one per month however many times it is administered.

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

### Multiple drug treatment

If the patient 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.

The BNF does not specify that separate bottles are required but only advises separate eye bottles for each eye if you are treating infective eye disease. UHCW currently operates a policy of single bottle use for both eyes and only uses separate bottles for antibiotics where necessary.

### 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](http://patient.info/doctor/eye-drugs-prescribing-and-administering)

Providers should use this advice in conjunction with 'The Handling of Medicines in Social Care' (RPSGB 2007) and should check the CQC website for recent updates in line with 'Guidance about Compliance' documents and refer to NICE Guidance 'Managing Medicines in Care Homes' SC1