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Gentamicin eye drops

Gentamicin drops are used to treat (or prevent) eye infections. Follow carefully the instructions you have been given for using the drops.

Your vision may become slightly blurred for a short while after using the drops. If so, do not drive and do not use tools or machines until you can see clearly again.

Do not wear contact lenses until your symptoms have completely gone.

About gentamicin eye drops

Type of medicine	An anti-infective eye drop
Used for	Prevention or treatment of eye infections in adults and children
Available as	Drops (which can be prescribed for use in eyes or ears)

Gentamicin eye drops are prescribed for bacterial infections of the eyes or eyelids. The drops kill germs (bacteria) which are the cause of infection.

Eye infections are a common cause of [conjunctivitis](#). In conjunctivitis, your eye becomes inflamed, feels gritty, and may water more than usual. The white of your eye may look red, and your eyelids may become swollen and stuck together with a discharge when you wake up in the morning. Only one eye may be infected to begin with, but it often spreads to both eyes. Most cases of infective conjunctivitis clear within a week or so without treatment. For more severe infections, or for infections which do not clear on their own, an antibiotic eye drop such as gentamicin is used.

Gentamicin eye drops are also prescribed for minor eye injuries, such as scratches and abrasions to the cornea – the delicate layer covering the surface of your eye. In such cases, the drops are prescribed to prevent an eye infection from developing while the eye heals.

Before using gentamicin eye drops

Some medicines are not suitable for people with certain conditions, and sometimes a medicine can only be used if extra care is taken. For these reasons, before you start using gentamicin drops it is important that your doctor knows:

- If you are pregnant or breastfeeding.
- If you have ever had an allergic reaction to gentamicin or to any other antibiotic, or to any other eye drops.
- If you are taking or using any other medicines. This includes any medicines you are taking which are available to buy without a prescription, as well as herbal and complementary medicines.

How to use gentamicin eye drops

Before you start the treatment, read the manufacturer's printed information leaflet from the pack. It will give you more information about the drops and will provide you with a full list of any side-effects which you may experience from using them. If your eyes have an obvious discharge or 'crust', it can help if you bathe them with cool clean water before using the gentamicin drops.

1. Wash your hands before you use the drops.
2. Remove the cap from the bottle.
3. Tilt your head back a little and gently pull the lower lid of your eye out to form a pocket.
4. Hold the bottle upside down near to your eye. Try not to touch your eye as you do this.
5. Gently squeeze the bottle to release one drop into your eye. Only use a second drop if the first drop missed going into your eye.

6. Close your eye for a minute or two, and press gently on the side of your nose where the corner of your eye meets your nose. This helps to stop the drop from draining away and keeps it in your eye.
7. Repeat the process in your other eye if you have been told to use the drops in both eyes.
8. Replace the cap.

Getting the most from your treatment

- Use the drops exactly as you have been advised by your doctor. It is likely that your doctor will have recommended you use the drops three or four times a day, but it may be more frequently than this, particularly on the first day. Try not to miss any doses. If you forget to put the drops in on time, do it as soon as you remember.
- Your eye should start to feel better within a few days. Even when your eye appears normal again, there may still be some germs present. It is important to continue to use gentamicin for a further 48 hours once your eye appears normal. This will help to make sure that all the germs (bacteria) have been killed.
- When you first put the drops into your eye, they may cause blurred vision. This should quickly clear, but make sure you can see clearly before you drive or before using machines or tools.
- Take care to avoid spreading the infection from one eye to the other, and to other members of your family. Washing your hands regularly (particularly after touching your eyes) and not sharing towels or pillows will help to prevent the infection from spreading.
- If the tip of the bottle touches your eye(s) when putting the drops in, it is a good idea to squeeze out two or three drops straightaway on to some tissue and rinse the tip with salt water.
- Eye infections can cause your eyes to become more sensitive to sunlight than usual. Wearing sunglasses may help to prevent this.
- If you are using any other eye drops, leave at least five minutes between applying each preparation. This is to prevent more liquid going into your eye than it can handle. Otherwise the drops will overflow from your eye and not have the intended effect.

- If your symptoms become worse despite using gentamicin drops, you should arrange to see your doctor for advice straightaway. In particular, see your doctor again if your eye becomes painful, if light starts to hurt your eyes, or if your sight is affected.
- Do not wear contact lenses until your symptoms have completely gone. Wait for 24 hours after the last dose of eye drops before using your lenses again.

Can gentamicin eye drops cause problems?

Along with their useful effects, most medicines can cause unwanted side-effects although not everyone experiences them. The table below contains some of the ones associated with gentamicin eye drops. The best place to find a full list of the side-effects which can be associated with your medicine, is from the manufacturer's printed information leaflet supplied with the medicine. Alternatively, you can find an example of a manufacturer's information leaflet in the reference section below. Speak with your doctor or pharmacist if any of the following continue or become troublesome.

Gentamicin eye drop side-effects	What can I do if I experience this?
Mild irritation or itching, burning or stinging	If this continues or becomes severe, speak with your doctor
Blurred vision	This should soon pass, but do not drive and do not use tools or machines while affected

If you experience any other symptoms which you think may be due to the eye drops, speak with your doctor or pharmacist for further advice.

How to store gentamicin eye drops

- Keep all medicines out of the reach and sight of children.
- Store in a cool, dry place, away from direct heat and light.

- Throw away the bottle of eye drops after you have finished your course of treatment, even if there is some liquid left. Do not keep opened bottles to use later, as eye drops must not be used if the bottle has been opened for longer than four weeks.

Important information about all medicines

If you suspect that someone has swallowed some of this medicine, contact the accident and emergency department of your local hospital for advice

If you buy any medicines check with a pharmacist that they are safe to use with your other medicines.

If you are having an operation or dental treatment, tell the person carrying out the treatment which medicines you are using.

This medicine is for you. Never give it to other people even if their condition appears to be the same as yours.

Do not keep out-of-date or unwanted medicines. Take them to your local pharmacy which will dispose of them for you.

If you have any questions about this medicine ask your pharmacist.

If you experience side effects, you can report them online through the [Yellow Card website](#).

Further reading

- [Manufacturer's PIL, Gentamicin Eye/Ear Drops 0.3%](#); FDC International Ltd, The electronic Medicines Compendium. Dated October 2020.
- [Medicines Complete BNF 87th Edition](#); British Medical Association and Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain, London.

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