

How to Instill Eyedrops

Infections, inflammation, glaucoma, and many other eye disorders often are treated with medicated eyedrops.

It is important to remember that all medicines can have side effects. Surprisingly, even the small amount of medication in an eyedrop can create significant side effects in other parts of the body. There are ways to decrease the absorption rate of the eyedrop into the system and to increase the time the eyedrop is on the eye, making the medicine safer and more effective.

Instilling eyedrops may seem difficult at first but becomes easier with practice. To place an eyedrop in your eye, first tilt back your head. Then create a “pocket” in front of the eye by pulling down on the lower with an index finger or by gently pinching the lower lid outward with the thumb and index finger. Let the drop fall into the pocket without touching the dropper tip to your eye, eyelid, or fingers, so as to prevent contaminating the bottle.

Immediately after instilling the drop, press on the inside corner of the eyelids next to 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 back of the throat, where it then is absorbed by the rest of the body. Keep your eyes closed for three to five minutes after instilling eyedrops.

Before opening your eyes, dab unabsorbed drops and tears from the closed lids with a tissue.

If you are taking two different types of eyedrops, wait at least five minutes before instilling the second 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.