



Dilating Eye Drops for Children

This material will help you understand the use of dilating eye drops.

What are dilating eye drops?

Dilating eye drops are drops that eye doctors use to make pupils larger. The pupil is the black area in the center of the colored part of the eye. The combination of dilating drops that is used during eye exams also relaxes the muscle that focuses the lens of the eye. Enlarging the pupil helps the doctor view the inside of the eye to diagnose problems. Relaxing the lens helps the doctor diagnose refractive errors like nearsightedness or farsightedness. This helps the doctor know which glasses or contacts to prescribe.

Dilating eye drops are also sometimes used to treat some eye conditions like amblyopia or “lazy eye.” When used for treatment, the drops will impair the ability of the good eye to focus. By dilating the pupil, the intention is that the child will favor the weaker eye.

What are the side effects of dilating eye drops?

The most common side effects of dilating eye drops include sensitivity to light and blurred vision. Your child can return to school after having his/her eyes dilated, but he/she may have trouble reading because of blurred vision. This will improve as the medication wears off. In the meantime, sun glasses can help relieve light sensitivity.

How long do dilating eye drops last?

Dilating eye drops most commonly last 4 to 24 hours depending on the type. In some cases, the drops last more than 24 hours in children. This is because eye doctors have to use stronger and longer lasting drops to measure a child's

refractive error. Because the amount of drops and their absorption can differ between the two eyes they may take different times to recover. Dilation from eye drops prescribed for treatment at home tend to last longer (days to weeks), however, these should still be used as frequently as prescribed for their lens relaxing effect.



For more information, scan these codes with your smartphone or visit the websites listed.

<http://www.aapos.org/terms/conditions/43>

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