

EYE MEDICATIONS

Everything you need to know and how to apply them

What types of eye medications are there?

There are three common types:

- Eye drops – water-based drops in a small bottle
- Eye gels – water-based gel in a small tube
- Eye cream/ointment – ointment in a small tube

How do I store the eye medications?

Most eye medications are stored at room temperature. There are a few that need to be stored in the fridge. You will be told this by the ophthalmologist or nurse, and/or the drug label should indicate it. Common examples are: chloramphenicol eye drops (not the chloramphenicol ointment version), proxymetacaine drops, latanoprost (before it is opened).



What are the expiry dates for eye medications?

Most eye medications should be used within 28 days of being opened but there is some variation. The information should be on the box/container, the printed drug label from The Ralph, or within the typed instructions from the ophthalmologist.

How much do I need to apply, in other words, what is the dose?

EYE DROPS

One drop is the correct dose. If you are not sure if the drop went into the eye properly then it is OK to apply a second drop, but in general applying more drops just flushes them out and is less effective!

EYE GELS

One 'blob' is fine

EYE CREAM OR OINTMENT

Half a cm is fine; it is often hard to control how much comes out so don't worry too much. NB for Optimune, aim for the size of a grain of rice!



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Do I need to leave a gap between applying different eye treatments?

Yes, this is important! If you don't leave a gap, the second drug will just flush out the first...

- After eye drops – leave at least 5 minutes
- After eye gels – leave at least 30 minutes
- After eye cream/ointment – try to leave several hours (a minimum of 2 hours)

Eye drops are most commonly used, so aim for at least 5 minutes in between different drops.

NB 'at least five minutes' means five minutes or longer, not exactly five minutes!

Is the order important?

Drops, then gels, then ointments. It is common for us to advise an ointment is applied 'before bed, last thing at night'

Is the timing of the eye drops important? Do I have to do them over night?

For most eye treatments, the timing is approximate but sometimes it is more important. The ophthalmologist or nurse will advise you.

- Eye medications twice daily – approximately 12 hours apart (morning and evening is OK)
- Eye medications 3 times daily – approximately 8 hours apart (morning, afternoon and evening is OK)
- Eye medications 4 times daily – approximately 6 hours apart

For some of the anti-glaucoma medications, the timing is more important so that the treatments are evenly spaced. The ophthalmologist and/or nurse will advise you.

It is rare for us to recommend eye medications overnight. If we think that is necessary, then we would normally recommend to hospitalise your pet.

Cataract patients

If your pet has had cataract surgery, the number of drops per day is usually quite high in the first couple of weeks (8-12 times a day). Please let us know if you are struggling and we will help!

See next page about the medication chart.



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This sounds a bit confusing – is there a chart that will help me?

Yes. We provide medication charts. They are quite blank on purpose so you can fill them in as you wish. The chart is very helpful if there are several medications and if more than one person is involved at home. One of our nurses can help fill in a chart to help get you started. We understand it can be quite challenging!

I'm really struggling – I need help!

That is absolutely fine – we know that it can be tricky and we are here to help. Please phone The Ralph and leave a message for Team Ophtho, or send an email to eyes@theralph.vet, or heretohelp@theralph.vet.

I need more medication – what do I do?

Please phone The Ralph to make the medication request, which will be sent to Team Ophtho for review and approval. Medications can be collected in person by you from The Ralph, posted to you at home (with a P&P fee), or sometimes arranged via your own vet (NB many eye medications are not routinely stocked by your own vet).

Please try to give us 48 hours notice.

Medication cannot be dispensed if we have not seen your pet for a long time; we will try to help whenever we can.

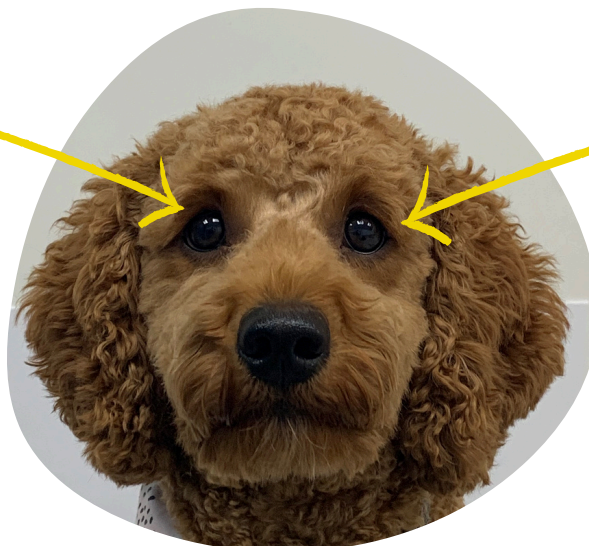
How to apply eye medications

LEFT EYE OR RIGHT EYE?

Before we start – let's be clear on which eye is which, as it can be confusing. Check out the picture of lovely Riley below...

RIGHT EYE

Your pet's right eye is their right eye, which is on the left as you face them.



LEFT EYE

Your pet's left eye is their left eye, which is on the right as you face them.



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SOME KEY POINTS TO UNDERSTAND AND HELP:

Applying eye medications is generally easier than you think but there are some very useful tips!

In general, the medication is placed onto the eye itself, from above and from behind. Animals do not see the medication coming if it is applied from behind.

- It is important that your pet is comfortable being handled around their head. Some animals are naturally so. If not, then spend some time cuddling and stroking their head, face and around the eyes, and then give a positive reward like a treat, without apply anything to the eye.
- Make your pet's head, the eye drug and your hands ONE UNIT so they all move together!
- Animals and people naturally open their eyelids when the head is tilted backwards (try it!), so this is a good head position to aim for.
- Holding and restraining your pet from behind is best, rather than chasing them from the front when they just back away under the chair etc.

For small pets, this means sitting them on your lap, with their bottom against your tummy, or on a table/counter, again, with their bottom against your tummy.



For larger animals this can mean standing with your back to a corner, and having your dog sit between your legs/knees, with their back against your legs.



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HAND POSITIONING (IF YOU ARE RIGHT-HANDED)

- Place your left hand under the chin to gently tilt the head back, nose towards the ceiling.
- Hold the bottle/tube in your right hand between your thumb and index finger.
- Rest the outer part of your right hand on your pet's head, above the eye. You can gently pull the upper eyelid back to open the eye a little.
- The thumb from your left hand, under the chin, can sometimes help to pull the lower eyelid skin down slightly.
- Apply the drop/gel/ointment from above, directly onto the surface of the eye.
- Allow the eye to blink.
- **Reward your pet with a big fuss and maybe a treat!**



When things are not going to plan...

Some animals are understandably very nervous, anxious and worried about being handled around the head and this makes eye drops difficult and/or impossible!

Please don't stress your pet and please try not to get stressed yourself. There are always options – we can be creative (!) so please contact your ophthalmologist and/or one of the ophthalmology nurses and we will make a plan together with you.

