

# Topical eye treatments

- Keep this leaflet safe, as you may need to refer to it again.
- Please ask your vet or veterinary nurse if you have any further questions.
- This medicine has been prescribed for your pet ONLY. Do not take it yourself or give it to another person or any other animal; it may harm them even if their symptoms appear to be the same.

This leaflet applies to a range of drugs that are applied to the eye. They include preparations that contain antibiotics, steroids, hormones and drugs that affect the functioning of the eye in various ways. Some of these preparations contain more than one drug. Many preparations are not authorized for veterinary use; however, a few are. Topical eye treatments are sold under a wide variety of trade names.

## How do I give topical eye treatments to my pet?

Topical eye treatments are not painful to your pet, but the sensation of drops/ointment touching the eye may be unpleasant. Try to administer the drops/ointment just before feeding or other normal activities that your pet enjoys. It is important to reinforce your pet's good behaviour with lots of praise and stroking. If at first your pet does not cooperate, be patient and try again a few minutes later. Even nervous pets will usually get used to the procedure. However, if you think your pet is likely to bite you during the procedure, then you should consider the use of a muzzle.



### Eye drops

- Gently push your pet's head upwards using a thumb under their bottom jaw.
- Hold the top eyelid open with the first finger on the same hand.
- Hold the bottle containing the eye drops in the other hand and, gently placing this hand on top of your pet's head, direct the nozzle towards the eye, keeping it at an angle (i.e. not perpendicular to the surface of the eye).
- Squeeze the bottle gently to administer the number of drops that your vet prescribed.
- Take care not to touch the surface of the eye with the bottle and avoid touching the bottle nozzle with your fingers.
- Hold your pet's head in this upward position for a few seconds to allow the eye drops to be absorbed.
- Wipe any excess drops off the bottle using clean tissue paper before replacing the cover.



### Eye ointment

- Pull the lower eyelid down gently and squeeze the ointment along the inside of the eyelid, keeping the nozzle almost parallel to the surface of the eye at all times.
- Take care not to touch the surface of the eye with the tube and avoid touching the tube nozzle with your fingers.
- Gently close the eyelids and massage to help disperse the ointment, but take care not to apply pressure to the eyeball.

### The Prescribing Cascade

Some topical eye treatments are authorized for use in dogs/cats/pets. However, on occasion, your veterinary surgeon will need to prescribe a medicine not authorized in veterinary species. In these cases, the medicine is authorized for use in human patients and is being used by vets under the 'prescribing cascade'. The medicine is not authorized by the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD), an executive agency of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), for use in dogs/cats/pets. Your vet can explain the 'prescribing cascade' in further detail to you and also explain why they are prescribing this drug for your pet. You will be asked to sign a consent form stating that you understand the reasons that the drug is being prescribed and its possible complications, before the treatment is issued.

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### Why has my pet been prescribed topical eye treatments?

Your pet may have been prescribed topical eye treatments for many different conditions. The most common conditions include infections, inflammation and high pressure within the eye (glaucoma). All eye diseases are serious as they can be painful and/or may lead to blindness.

### How should I store topical eye treatments?

Some topical eye treatments do not contain preservatives. Thus, once opened, they should be stored in a refrigerator and discarded after 4 weeks, even if you have not finished them. Please read the leaflet for each eye treatment that has been dispensed for your pet carefully and follow the storage advice. For safety, **all medicines should be kept out of the reach and sight of children.**

### How long will my pet need topical eye treatments?

Your vet will advise you on the length of time for which you will need to give this medicine. This may vary between patients. It is important that you complete the course of treatment even if your pet seems to be well. If your pet is still unwell at the end of the course, then you should contact your vet as soon as possible.

### What should I do if I run out of topical eye treatment?

Try not to run out of treatment. Make sure you order more from your vet if your supply is getting low. If you do run out, contact your own vet for further advice and restart the course as soon as possible.

### How often should I apply topical eye treatments?

For most eye treatments, your veterinary surgeon will advise you to split the frequency of application evenly during the 'waking' hours. In this case, a treatment which is to be applied three times daily, can be given at 8 a.m., 2 p.m. and 10 p.m. However, some eye treatments are time-sensitive (specifically those that reduce pressure within the eye) and their application may have to be spaced evenly over the 24-hour period. In this case, a treatment which is to be applied three times daily can be given at 6 a.m., 2 p.m. and 10 p.m. Your vet should advise you in this regard, but please check with them if you are uncertain.

### What if multiple eye treatments have been dispensed?

If multiple eye treatments have been dispensed, care must be taken to separate the application of the drugs by at least 15 minutes, otherwise one drug may 'wash' the other drug out and make it less effective. In general, eye drops should be administered before eye ointments.

### What should I do if I miss a dose?

If a dose is missed, give the medication as soon as possible. However, it is best to skip the missed dose if it is almost time for your pet's next scheduled dose. **DO NOT** give a double dose to make up for the missed dose and do not exceed the stated dose in any one 24-hour period.

### What should I do if my pet is accidentally given too many doses?

**Contact your vet immediately** if your pet is given an overdose of topical eye treatment. However, a single extra dose is unlikely to cause significant problems.

### Can my pet receive topical eye treatments if I am already giving them other drugs?

Tell your vet if you are giving your pet any other medications, even if you think they already know. This includes herbal or off-the-shelf remedies from a pet shop, pharmacy or health store.

### What are the possible side effects of topical eye treatments for my pet?

If your pet shows *any* unusual symptoms whilst taking this medication, please contact your vet. Although it is rare, all eye treatments can cause irritation in the eye. Any side effects depend on the dose, the length of treatment and the individual.

### Whom do I contact if I want to know more?

If you have any questions about an eye treatment, or concerns about your pet's health, contact your own vet. They will know your pet's medical history and will know about the specific medicine.