



# Eye drops – how to administer them

**Contributors:** Vetstream Ltd



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**Eye problems in dogs are quite common. Tears quickly wash out any treatment put in the eye so eye drops need to be given several times a day. This means you will have to learn how to give the treatment at home.**

## How often do I need to put drops in?

Some drops only need to be given once a day, others up to six times daily. Always follow the instructions given to you by your veterinarian very carefully. Never give more than the recommended dose and, if at all possible, try not to miss treatments.

## How do I hold my dog?

You will find it easier to hold your dog at a comfortable working height. Try placing your dog on a table or raised surface. If the surface is slippery, put a carpet tile or towel down so that your dog feels more secure. If your dog struggles a lot, you may need to wrap your dog in a towel or blanket to prevent them scratching you. You will need to get a friend to help you - one of you will hold the dog whilst the other steadies the head and puts the drops into the eye.

## How do I apply drops?

The person holding the dog should grip the dogs head firmly under the chin and tilt the head upwards. The other person holds the dropper bottle in one hand and opens the dogs eye using the thumb and forefinger of the other hand. Position the dropper bottle a few centimetres above the eye and squeeze gently to release the right number of drops. Avoid touching the eye with the bottle spout.

## How do I apply ointments/creams?

Ointments and creams are slightly more difficult to apply because they are thick like toothpaste. Hold the dog and open its eye as above. Holding the tube of ointment above the eye, squeeze out some ointment and let it drop onto the eye to lie between the lids. Detach this 'worm' of ointment from the tube by pulling the ointment down against the lower lid. Always avoid touching the eye with the nozzle.

## Does it matter where on the eye the drops/ointment falls?

As long as the treatment falls on the eye somewhere it does not matter where. When your dog blinks the drug will spread all over the surface of the eye.

## Does the treatment hurt?

The eye is one of the most sensitive parts of the body and putting anything into an eye may cause discomfort. However, eye drops and ointments are designed for use in the eye and any discomfort will be slight. Your dog may blink a lot or have a 'watery eye' for a few moments after you have put the drops in. On rare occasions your dog may paw at the eye(s), rub its face along the floor or the white of the eye becomes red and sore. If so, stop the treatment immediately and contact your veterinarian.

## **How long do I have to continue the treatment?**

Always continue the treatment for as long as your veterinarian recommends. Eye problems often appear to get better very quickly once treatment starts but if you stop treatment too soon the problems may come back.

## **What if I really can't give the drops myself?**

Most owners get quite good at giving eye drops with a bit of practice, but if you really can't do it yourself tell your veterinarian. He may be able to prescribe a different drug which does not need to be given so often or which can be given by mouth instead. In some cases a nurse may be able to help you, or your dog could be taken into the hospital for a few days to be given treatment.

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