

Atropine

(pronounced attro - peen)

Why has atropine been prescribed?

Atropine eye drops are usually used to treat eye conditions but these can be also used orally under the tongue for their effect in relieving the symptoms of hypersalivation (drooling) caused by clozapine. This is an unlicensed use of the medication. This means that the medication is being used in a way which is not covered by the UK license for the drug. This does not mean it is unsafe to use the medication in this way. There is some experience of using atropine eye drops for hypersalivation.

Are there any precautions with atropine?

Atropine is suitable for most people. As with all medicines, however, there are precautions. Your prescriber will usually check that it is safe to prescribe atropine, but let your prescriber know if any of the following apply to you, as extra care may be needed:

- a) if you have glaucoma, urinary retention, gastrointestinal obstruction or suffer from heart, liver, kidney or prostate trouble.
- b) if you are taking any other medication for schizophrenia, dementia, depression or Parkinson's disease or a heart condition. Also, tell your prescriber if you buy any medicine 'over the counter' from a pharmacy or supermarket. Please also tell your prescriber if you take any alternative or complementary medicine such as Chinese herbal medicines.
- c) if you are pregnant, breast feeding, or wish to become pregnant.

What is the usual dose of atropine?

The dose is usually one to two drops four times daily.

How should atropine be taken?

Atropine is usually dropped under the tongue two to four times a day. Alternatively the drops can be dissolved in water and used as mouthwash. However, you and your prescriber may decide that it is better for you to take the medicine another way.

What form does atropine come in?

Atropine is available as 1% eye drops.

What should be done if a dose is missed?

If you forget a dose, take it as soon as you remember. If you miss a whole day's dose – just carry on as normal with the usual dose. If you miss more than a day's dose, speak to your prescriber.

What will happen when atropine is first taken?

Atropine begins to work in an hour or two. Full effect is not seen for several days. Like all drugs atropine produces side effects. Many people do not experience any side effects. However some people may experience some side effects. We have listed potential side effects in the table below, whether or not they are likely to be short or long-term and what measures can be taken is also described. There are other possible side effects – we have listed only the most important ones. Ask your doctor, pharmacist or nurse if you are worried about anything else that you think might be a side effect. Further information on side effects is available in the official manufacturer's leaflet.

Reporting side effects

The 'Yellow Card' scheme encourages patients to report any side effects that they feel may be caused by their medication. Ask your doctor, pharmacist or nurse for the forms if you wish to report any side effects. Alternatively, telephone 0808 100 3352 or go to www.mhra.gov.uk.

Is atropine addictive?

Atropine is not addictive.

Is it OK to stop taking atropine when symptoms go away?

No. If you stop taking atropine, your original symptoms may return. Most people need to remain on atropine for several months. You should always discuss with your prescriber any plans you have to reduce or stop any of your prescribed medicines.

Are there any alternatives to atropine?

Yes, there are alternatives available so most people can find one which suits them.

Summary of side effects

(Other less common) side effects	How common is it and what can be done about it?
Nausea	Uncommon This should wear off within a few days. Taking the medication with food may help. Discuss with your prescriber if this persists.
Constipation	Uncommon Eat lots of fibre – fruit and vegetables are good sources. Drink plenty of fluids. Your prescriber may prescribe a laxative.
Urinary retention (difficulty passing water)	Rare Contact your prescriber straightaway if you have any difficulty passing water.
Dizziness	Rare This may wear off within a few days. Discuss with your prescriber if this persists.
Blurred vision	Rare This should wear off within a few days. Discuss with your prescriber if this persists. It may be necessary to switch to another medication. Do not drive or operate heavy machinery until vision is clear.
Skin flushing and increased body temperature	Very rare Contact your prescriber if you experience these side effects.
Tachycardia (palpitations)	Very rare Contact your prescriber if you experience palpitations.

Very common = almost everyone affected *Common* = many people affected *Uncommon* = some people affected
Rare = few people affected *Very rare* = very few or no one affected

Disclaimer

This leaflet is to help you understand more about your medication. This is not an official manufacturer's Patient Information Leaflet (see <http://www.medicines.org.uk/emc/>). Remember, leaflets like this can only describe some of the effects of medication. You may also find other books or leaflets useful. If you have access to the internet you may find a lot of information there as well, but be careful, as internet based information is not always accurate. If in doubt consult your GP or a health care professional.

This leaflet has been supplied by:

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