

Patient information

How to Use Your Interferon Alpha 2b Eye Drops

St Paul's Eye Department

You have been prescribed **Interferon Alpha-2b eye drops** to treat your eye condition. Interferon Alpha-2b is an aggressive agent, which can be harmful if misused. It is therefore important that you handle your drops with care, using them only as prescribed.

How often should I use my eye drops?

One drop should be instilled into the affected eye four times daily (e.g. 7am, 12pm, 5pm, and 10pm).

The drops will be supplied to you on a monthly basis, from the hospital pharmacy because they do not contain any preservative.

The doctor will discuss the length of treatment with you. It is routinely a twelve-week course of treatment but the doctor will examine your eye every four weeks and if you have any problems or reactions to the drops, the treatment may be reduced down to a shorter course of treatment.

You will be given a supply of disposable gloves. New gloves should be used each time you handle the drops. A special container will also be provided to safely discard your used drop bottles and droppers, used gloves and all other waste (i.e. any tissues used to wipe the eye after instilling the drops).

On completion of treatment, the container should be sealed and returned to the hospital pharmacy for safe disposal (either at your home hospital or when you return to the Royal Liverpool Hospital).

Should you need to use other drops at the same time of day, please leave at least five minutes between them to prevent one drop from diluting the other.

You will also be prescribed an ointment to put in the eye twice a day throughout the course of Interferon Alpha-2b therapy. Place the ointment in the eye five minutes after the Interferon Alpha-2b or any other additional drops you may take.

How do I use my eye drops?

- Make sure you have a clean tissue available for use and that your special container is to hand.
- You could also protect your skin before instillation of the drops by applying a light covering of a white petroleum jelly ointment (such as Vaseline) to your cheek. Wash your hands thoroughly after use.
- Wash and dry your hands, then put on a fresh pair of disposable gloves.
- Remove the dropper cap from the container. Gently pull down the lower eyelid of the eye being treated, until a small pocket forms between the eyelid and the eyeball. Using the dropper, put one drop into the pocket.
- Replace the dropper cap and close the drop's bottle without delay.
- If any drops spill onto your cheek, you should immediately wipe them away with a tissue which should be discarded using the special container, then wash the affected area with warm water and soap.
- Store the drops in the fridge.

Are there any side effects from the treatment?

The drops may sting at first and usually cause the eye to become a little inflamed and sensitive. If the stinging or inflammation becomes severe you should seek advice from the doctor.

The ointment prescribed with it **will** blur your vision for a while after each application. Please **do not** drive or operate machinery if you experience any blurring of vision.

Are there any alternative treatments available?

There may be other treatments available and the doctor will have discussed these with you. If you think you need any further information please feel free to ask your doctor or specialist ocular oncology nurse (your key worker).

What will happen if I don't have any treatment?

Your tumour may continue to grow or recur. This might make treatment more difficult and could make the eye painful. There may be an increased risk of tumour spread out of the eye and to other parts of the body.

Is there anything else I should know?

- Remember the eye drops have been prescribed for you only and you must never let anyone else use them. Do store the drops in the fridge.
- The drops can be toxic if used incorrectly so please ensure they are stored in a safe place out of the reach of children.
- **Handling of drops is not recommended during pregnancy. Care should be taken if there is any risk of pregnancy or if breastfeeding.**
- **Both men and women should use birth control methods during and for three months following treatment with Interferon Alpha-2b eye drops.**

Feedback

Your feedback is important to us and helps us influence care in the future.

Following your discharge from hospital or attendance at your outpatient appointment you will receive a text asking if you would recommend our service to others. Please take the time to text back, you will not be charged for the text and can opt out at any point. Your co-operation is greatly appreciated.

Further Information

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www.eyetumour.com

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All Trust approved information is available on request in alternative formats, including other languages, easy read, large print, audio, Braille, moon and electronically.

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