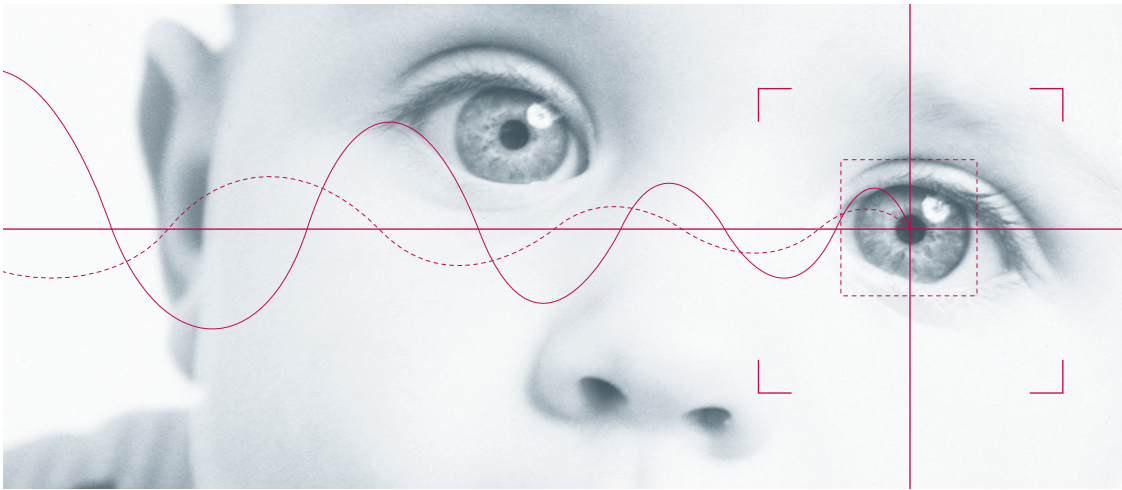


## Cyclopentolate and phenylephrine eye drops for children

The Eye (Ophthalmology) Department  
The Royal London Hospital



---

## Introduction

This leaflet tells you about the eye drops that we use to help us examine your child's eyes.

Cyclopentolate and phenylephrine are two different types of drops that are given together to temporarily increase the size of (dilate) the pupils and relax the eye focussing muscles. When the drops have taken effect we will be able to see the retina and other structures inside your child's eyes more easily. We will also be able to accurately assess your child's glasses prescription.

A member of staff will put in the drops by gently pulling down your child's lower eyelid and placing the drops in their eye. If your child finds this difficult and closes their eye, the nurse will carefully open both eyelids to put the drops in.

## Waiting for the drops to work

Tell your child not to worry if their eyes sting or feel irritated for a brief period, it should not be for long. Your child will find that their vision becomes blurred as the size of their pupils increases, and they may also become more sensitive to bright light. Some children find they have a dry mouth and feel drowsy. These reactions to the eye drops are quite normal but a very few people have an allergic reaction and if your child complains of any of the following please let the nurse know so we can help:

- They are in pain or feel unwell
- They have haloes in their vision (rings of light seen around a light source)

---

We will check your child's pupils to see they have enlarged before their eyes are examined. Some children with darker coloured eyes may need more drops to fully dilate their pupils. Pupil enlargement takes a while and the eye examination will take place half an hour or more after the drops have been placed in your child's eyes.

### After you have left the hospital

Once the eye examination is over you will be able to leave the hospital with your child. The effects of the eye drops will gradually wear off over about two to six hours. However, if your child has darker coloured eyes it can take up to 24 hours. During this time your child may find reading difficult and their eyes may be sensitive to light – sunglasses can help.

A bad reaction to cyclopentolate and phenylephrine eye drops is rare, but if any of the following occur take your child to your nearest hospital A&E department immediately and explain that they have been given eye drops:

- Severe pain
- Nausea and vomiting
- Haloes in their vision
- Increased heart rate



## Contact details

### Ophthalmology Department

The Royal London Hospital

Whitechapel

London E1 1BB

020 7377 7000 ext. 2483 (office hours 9am–5pm)

[www.bartsandthelondon.nhs.uk](http://www.bartsandthelondon.nhs.uk)

