


EYE CARE		
VERSION No	2	
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Introduction

The eyes in the elderly are prone to becoming infected as the lachrymal system does not function as efficiently as a person ages. The lens also has aged and tends to be more opaque than when younger. As the lens deteriorates during the lifetime of the Individual so there is a necessity for the person to wear spectacles. These, therefore, tend to cause problems as the face becomes thinner and the amount of fat reduces. All these factors contribute to the elderly suffering “runny” eyes and prone to infection.




The eyes require great care to avoid injury when washing, from towels etc. and also when cleaning the eyes themselves. Inspection should occur each time the face is washed. Eye care procedures require a firm but gentle touch. The fingernails should be short and smooth. The hands should be thoroughly cleaned prior to commencing the procedure.

Procedure:














- ⑥ obtain the consent and co-operation of the Individual to reduce anxiety
- ⑥ assess the eye for swelling and inflammation
- ⑥ select optimum position, usually head tilted back and well supported and discourage Individual from moving during the procedure and so maintain comfort
- ⑥ ensure adequate light to enable the eyes to be clearly seen
- ⑥ swab lids from inner to outer canthus to reduce the spread of any existing infection and to avoid corneal abrasion using a clean wet swab each time
- ⑥ clean until all discharge has been removed. Dry below the area to discourage bacterial growth
- ⑥ ask the Individual to look upwards and, using gauze, slightly invert the lower lid
- ⑥ for instillation of eye drops, place a drop of solution in the centre of the lower fornix to facilitate maximum retention
- ⑥ ask the Individual to gently close the eye to disperse the solution
- ⑥ repeat as prescribed, recording in nursing records
- ⑥ for installation of ointment, to ensure correct application and to minimise the infection, ointment should be applied from the inner to outer canthus. A separate tube must be used for each eye
- ⑥ use a tissue to dry the surrounding area and repeat as prescribed

1. Medical opinion should be sought if either excessive discharge or excessive discomfort is experienced during the procedure. In either event, swab for culture and sensitivity as subsequent antibiotic therapy may be required. In completing an inspection of the eye, be methodical and observe:

- ❓ Discharge – where does the discharge appear to be coming from?
- ❓ Eyelids – are they swollen or tender?
- ❓ Eyelashes – are they encrusted or stuck together?
- ❓ Conjunctiva – is it white or inflamed?
- ❓ Cornea – is it transparent or hazy/cloudy?
- ❓ Anterior Chamber/Aqueous Humour – is it clear or cloudy?
- ❓ Iris – note reaction to light
- ❓ Pupil – note degree of dilation and shape
- ❓ Photophobia- sensitive to light
- ❓ Excessive lacrimation- runny eyes
- ❓ In preparing for eye care procedures:

-  check drops/ointment against prescription sheet to ensure that drops/ointment are instilled as prescribed
-  check expiry date to ensure medication is viable
-  write the date of the opening on the container

2. In storing eye care treatments, note that drops/ointment are prescribed for a particular Individual and as such should only be used for that Individual. They are sterile when packed and every effort should be made to keep them in this condition as most will come in multi dose containers which will last for several days. In applying treatments, note the following:

-  as eye drops/ointment in the main contain drugs, the administration of medication guidelines should be followed, i.e. checking the drugs, Individual, dose, expiry of drugs and length of treatment
-  always check whether the drug is for the right eye or left eye or both
-  test dropper to ensure it drops
-  hold swab beneath the lower lid
-  hold the dropper as close to the eye as possible without touching the lids
-  ask Individual to look up and place the drop/s in outer side of lower fornix after drawing the lid away and down. With ointment squeeze a small amount in the inside of the lower lid and release
-  wipe away any excess drop/ointment and tears with swab
-  teach procedure to the Individual as appropriate to enable subsequent self-administration
-  store drops/ointment as recommended
-  Following application of the treatment watch for:
-  Blurred vision, due to the application of ointment or mydriatic drops
-  Allergic reactions to prescribed ointment/drops. Inform the carer/Nurse in Charge and discontinue
-  Document actions in nursing records

Further Guidance
Managing medicines in care homes
<http://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/sc/sc1.jsp>
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