

Information about Glaucoma Medications

Your doctor has recommended that you start medication to help lower your intraocular pressure (IOP), the pressure produced by fluid within the eye. This medication is indicated to treat glaucoma, or to prevent glaucoma in those with elevated intraocular pressure. Successful treatment depends upon lowering the IOP to a level determined by your doctor, based upon a number of factors, including the starting pressure, your specific condition, and your age. In some cases this can be achieved with a single medication, though additional drugs are often necessary to reach the desired target IOP.

It is very important that you take the medication(s) as prescribed every day. Medication is used to treat and control your disease, but does not cure it. All medications have potential side effects, though most patients tolerate glaucoma medications quite well with few problems. If you believe you are suffering from a medication side effect, please call our office at 520-293-6740. *You should not alter or discontinue treatment without first notifying your prescribing doctor.*

Tips for eye drop use:

- Always take your medication(s) around the same time(s) each day.
- Do not use your medication(s) more often than prescribed.
- Keep your eyes closed for 1-2 minutes after using drops. This helps the medication absorb into the eye and limits systemic side effects.
- If the medication irritates your eyes, you may use artificial tear/moisturizing drops 5 minutes before and/or 5 minutes afterwards.
- You only need a single drop. If you're not sure that the drop went in, it is OK to use another- this will cause no harm.

See reverse side for more information about potential side effects.

Side effects of commonly used glaucoma medications are detailed below. Nearly all eye drops can cause burning, irritation, or blurred vision upon use. These symptoms are usually brief. Again, if you believe you are having a problem with a medication we recommend you call our office to discuss it before stopping the drug. Arrangements can be made to substitute another medication or to arrange a visit with a doctor.

LUMIGAN (bimatoprost), TRAVATAN-Z (travoprost), XALATAN (latanoprost)

This family of medications typically causes side effects localized to the eyes. Redness of the eyes is most common, is purely cosmetic, and usually fades within a couple of weeks. Eyelashes often grow longer and thicker. Darkening of the skin around the eyes may also occur, and is reversible when stopping the medication. None of these side effects is harmful to your health.

ALPHAGAN-P (brimonidine), IOPIDINE (apraclonidine)

These medications sometimes cause fatigue or tiredness. Dryness of the mouth may occur. In elderly or frail patients confusion may occur. Allergy may develop to these drops, often with significant redness, puffiness, and itching of the eyes.

AZOPT (brinzolamide), TRUSOPT (dorzolamide)

Blurred vision is common after using these drops, but usually lasts a short time. A sour, bitter, or other unusual taste may occur. Dryness or discomfort of the eye and headache occur less commonly.

TIMOPTIC, BETAMOL, ISTALOL (timolol), BETAGAN (levobunolol), OCUPRESS (carteolol), BETOPTIC (betaxolol), OPTIPRANOLOL (metipranolol)

Beta-blocker medications may slow the heart rate. They can therefore cause fatigue, and can interfere with the ability to exercise vigorously. They should generally not be used by anyone with irregular heart rhythms or certain other heart conditions. These medications can also exacerbate asthma or emphysema/COPD, and should be avoided or used with caution in these conditions. Less common problems include depression, confusion, and reduced sex drive.

COSOPT (timolol and dorzolamide)

This is a combination product of timolol and dorzolamide. Side effects are as for individual drugs as above.

COMBIGAN (timolol and brimonidine)

This is a combination product of timolol and brimonidine. Side effects are as for individual drugs as above.