

Eye Ointment for Your Newborn

Client Name: _____

What is erythromycin eye ointment?

Erythromycin is a broad-spectrum antibiotic that can be used for many different infections. It is in the form of an ointment that is placed into the eyes within the first hour or so following the birth.

Why is eye ointment so important?

The administration of antibiotic eye ointment replaced the use of silver nitrate (AgNO₃) for use in eyes of infants years ago. The ointment is primarily of importance to prevent blindness in infants who are born to mothers with the sexually transmitted disease gonorrhea. Other sexually transmitted diseases also can cause eye infections, but rarely blindness. There are also many other bacterial organisms the infant could pick up while being born through the vagina; however, these would most likely not cause a problematic eye infection in the infant.

What are the risks of erythromycin eye ointment?

There is a definite contraindication if either the mother or the father of the baby has an allergy to antibiotics in this class. The ointment does cause the eyelids to become red and puffy for about 12-24 hours, as well as blurring their vision. The ointment does not sting the eyes.

Fill out and sign the lower portion of this form **ONLY** if you refuse treatment. Otherwise, your newborn will be treated as required by law.

I _____ have been informed of the risks and benefits of erythromycin eye ointment for my newborn. I choose to **REFUSE** treatment of erythromycin eye ointment for my newborn at the time of birth for the following reason(s) *(please initial)*:

____ Religious Convictions

____ Conscientious Objection

____ Other: _____

Signature

Date