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Eye Drops & Medication During Ramadan

During the Holy month of Ramadan, the Muslim community take part in fasting. This means that from sunrise to sunset, there is no eating or drinking (not even water).

How does Ramadan affect eye medication?

During Ramadan people often stop putting in eye drops (such as Glaucoma medication, antibiotic drops and lubricant drops) as it is believed this would be breaking fast. The reason people believe this would break the fast is that drops put in the eye can sometimes seep through a passage from the eye to the back of the throat. Once someone stops taking medication or eye drops during Ramadan, often they do not start taking them again as they do not notice an impact.

Why is this a problem?

Stopping medication can be dangerous, especially for those with the eye condition Glaucoma, as daily medication is necessary to lower pressure in the eye. For Glaucoma, lowering pressure is the only adjustable treatment which prevents loss of vision, so stopping taking prescribed medication can cause harmful effects. To prevent vision-loss getting worse with Glaucoma, drops must be used exactly as the instructions say. Daily medication also prevents infection and reduces inflammation after any surgery on the surface of the eye.

How to take eye drops without breaking fast

During Ramadan, drops can still be taken twice a day in a way that does not break fast by following these steps:

- Morning drops should be put in during **SEHRI** time when fasting begins.
- Evening drops should be put in during **IFTAR** time when fast is broken.
- Press the corner of the eye near the nose for a minute after putting each drop in to prevent it seeping through to the back of the throat. This practice is called Punctal Occlusion.
- Any eye drops after cataract surgery **must be put in at the dosing time advised**, but drops can still be taken without breaking fast by using Punctal Occlusion (described above).

Teaching and practicing this simple method during Ramadan is very important to prevent sight loss getting worse and other eye related issues.