



Lesson one: Introduction to managing vision and eye health problems in primary care

There are five TAP Primary eye care guides. They provide step-by-step guidance to manage common vision and eye health problems. Each primary eye care guide has:

- Steps - indicate where to look on the TAP Primary eye care screen form.
- Results - indicate what to do next based on the person's results.

Sometimes more than one result will be correct. Take all actions based on the person's results and always refer based on the highest level of urgency.

Lesson two: How to manage vision problems

How to use Guide one: Vision problems

Guide one provides a step-by-step guide to managing people with vision problems.

- Step 1: Check distance vision result
- Step 2: Check if the person is 40 years or older
- Step 3: Check near vision result

Refer to the results for each step and take appropriate action. Depending on the result, actions might include:

- Provide eye health education
- Advise to return for a vision screen
- Provide near vision spectacles
- Refer to eye health professional.

Introduction to near vision spectacles

Near vision problems in older adults (presbyopia) can be improved with near vision spectacles. They are different to prescription spectacles. Near vision spectacles work by making text or objects look larger (magnified). A person should only be assessed for near vision spectacles if they:

- Pass the distance vision screen
- Are 40 years old or over and do not pass the near vision screen
- Pass the eye health screen and do not have any other vision or eye health concerns.

Learn how to provide near vision spectacles in the [TAP Near vision spectacles module](#).

Prescription spectacles are only provided after a full eye exam by an eye health professional. Prescription spectacles help people with different types of distance vision problems.

How to refer

To refer a person to an eye health professional or another service:

1. Discuss the referral with the person and their caregiver where appropriate
2. Complete the TAP Primary eye care referral form
3. Complete the TAP Primary eye care follow up referral list
4. Record on the TAP Primary eye care screen form.

Lesson three: How to manage red eye problems

How to use Guide two: Red eye problems

Guide two provides a step-by-step guide to managing people with red eye problems.

- Step 1: Check distance vision result
- Step 2: Check if person has itchiness, watering, discharge or pain with the red eye.

Refer to the results for each step and take appropriate action. Depending on the result, actions might include:

- Refer to health professional or eye health professional
- Provide eye health education
- Advise to clean eyelashes and lids
- Apply a cold compress
- Advise to remove allergen
- Give allergy medication, topical antibiotics, lubricating eye drops or pain medication (only if qualified to do so).

How to clean eyelashes and eyelids

To clean eyelashes and lids prepare equipment and explain what you will do.

1. Ensure your hands are clean or wear gloves
2. Wet the gauze/cloth/cotton bud with clean water or sterile saline solution
3. Ask the person to close their eyes and gently wipe the eyelid and eyelashes – start from the inner corner of the eye and move outward
4. Do not use the same gauze, cotton bud or cloth between the two eyes
5. Dispose of the used gauze/cotton buds/cloth afterward.

Advise the person to clean their eyelashes and eyelids two to three times per day with clean water until their symptoms have gone.

How to provide a topical antibiotic

Topical antibiotics include ointments and eye drops. They are used for bacterial eye infections.

There are different types of eye drops. They include:

- Antibiotic eye drops for thick or sticky eye discharge (commonly caused by bacterial infections)
- Allergy eye drops for itchy eyes (commonly caused by allergic eye disease)
- Lubricating eye drops for dry eyes.

Warning

You should only provide medication if you are qualified to do so. If providing antibiotic medication, always:

- Check the expiry date to ensure the medication has not expired
- Ask if the person has any allergies to the medication or its ingredients and do not provide the medication if unsure
- Read the dosage and instructions label on the medication you are using
- Note that not all antibiotics are suitable for young children
- If in doubt, discuss with a health professional or  refer the person to a health professional who can safely provide the medication.

How to give antibiotic ointment

1. Ensure your hands are clean or wear clean gloves
2. Have a dry piece of tissue or gauze nearby
3. Ask the person to tilt their head backwards and look up
4. Gently pull down the person's bottom eyelid with your finger to create a pocket
5. Hold the ointment a few centimetres above the eye
6. Squeeze a small strip of ointment into the pocket at the lower part of the eye without touching the tip of the tube to the eye or eyelids
7. Ask the person to close their eyes then wipe away excess ointment, if any, with the dry piece of tissue/gauze
8. Throw away the used tissue/gauze afterward.



How to give eye drops

1. Ensure your hands are clean or wear clean gloves
2. Have a dry piece of tissue or gauze nearby
3. Ask the person to gently tilt their head backwards
4. Gently pull the bottom eyelid down with your finger to create a pocket
5. Hold the bottle a few centimetres above the eye
6. Squeeze the bottle and put only one drop into the pocket at the lower part of the eye without touching the tip of the bottle to the eye or eyelids
7. With the person's eye closed, ask them to press gently on the inner corner of their eye with their finger – this will keep the drops in the eye
8. Wipe away excess drops, if any, with the dry piece of tissue/gauze
9. Dispose of the used tissue/gauze afterward.



Tell the person how much and how often they should use the ointment, or eye drops and record your action on the TAP Primary eye care screen form. They should always wash and dry their hands before and after applying.

Lesson four: How to manage external eye problems

How to use Guide three: External eye problems

Guide three provides a step-by-step guide to managing people with external eye problems.

- Step 1: Check distance vision result
- Step 2: Check eye health screen result and examine eye for more detail
- Step 3: Check if the lump is painful and red with thick or sticky discharge

Refer to the results for each step and take appropriate action. Depending on the result, actions might include:

- Refer to eye health professional
- Advise to clean eyelashes and lids
- Give topical antibiotic
- Remove inward turning eyelashes
- Use a hot compress.

How to apply a hot compress

When a person has a lump on their eyelid a hot compress can provide relief.

Prepare equipment and explain:

- You will put a hot cloth on their eye to help reduce the lump
- The person should hold it over their eye for 5-10 minutes
- They should repeat this process 2-4 times a day until the lump has gone.

Apply hot compress:

1. Rinse the clean cloth in hot water (ensure water is hot but not boiling to avoid burning the skin)
2. Ask the person to close their eyes
3. Put the hot cloth on the person's eye and ask them to hold it in place for 5-10 minutes.



How to remove inward turning eyelashes

Eyelashes that turn inwards irritate the eye. It is important to remove them.

Prepare equipment and explain what you will do.

Remove eyelashes:

1. Ensure good lighting so that you can clearly see the person's eyelashes.
2. Ask person to sit or lie down comfortably.
3. Tell them to keep their head tilted back or pressed back into the bed and not turn their head from side to side.
4. Ensure your hands are clean, or wear clean gloves
5. Find the eyelash/es that are turned inward. Look for it on both the upper and lower eyelids.
6. Use the tweezers to hold the eyelash at the bottom to prevent breakage. You may need to hold the eyelid in place with your finger as you pull the eyelash.
7. Pull out the entire eyelash ensuring the root is intact.
8. If you are unable to remove the inward turning eyelashes ➞ refer the person to an eye health professional.

Lesson five: How to manage vision and eye health problems in children three years and younger

How to use Guide four: Children three years and younger

Guide four provides a step-by-step guide to managing children three years and younger.

- Step 1: Check if the child was pre-term or low birth weight
- Step 2: Check fundus reflex result
- Step 3: Check eye health screen result

Refer to the results for each step and take appropriate action. Depending on the result, actions might include:

- Refer to health professional or eye health professional
- Advise to clean eyelashes and lid
- Give topical antibiotics or allergy drops
- Health assessment for low vitamin A.

Vitamin A supplements for children

Vitamin A is important for a child's growth and development. Low vitamin A can lead to a range of problems, including eye damage and blindness. Measles and prolonged diarrhoea can lead to low vitamin A.

Vitamin A supplements can be given to children with low vitamin A after a full health assessment by a health professional.

Lesson six: How to manage eye injuries

Guide five: Eye injuries

Guide five provides a step-by-step guide to managing eye injuries.

- Step 1: Check what caused the injury
- Step 2: Turn eyelid out and look for foreign body in eye
- Step 3: Check distance vision result
- Step 4: Test pupil reactions and eye movement

Refer to the results for each step and take appropriate action. Depending on the result, actions might include:

- Wash out eye
- Refer to eye health professional
- Give topical antibiotic or pain medication
- Remove foreign body
- Cover eye with eye pad or shield.

How to wash out eye

Warning

If a person has a chemical eye injury you should wash out the eye **before** you continue the primary eye care screen.

Prepare equipment and explain what you will do.

Wash out eye(s):

1. Place a clean bowl, kidney dish or towel against the person's cheek, with their head tilted towards it
2. Hold the eyelids open gently
3. Use the saline/water in your jug or syringe to wash the eye continuously, asking the person to look from side to side
4. Wash out under the eyelids by turning the eyelid out if needed (this is in the next topic)
5. Continue for a minimum of 10 minutes
6. If both eyes are affected, switch between the eyes every 30 seconds with the person facing up.

How to turn an eyelid outward

Turning a person's eyelid outward can help you to:

- Wash out chemicals
- Remove a foreign body
- Remove eyelashes that turn inward.

Prepare equipment and explain what you will do.

Turn eyelid outward:

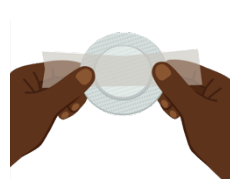
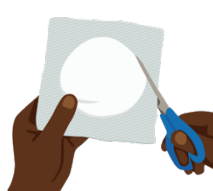
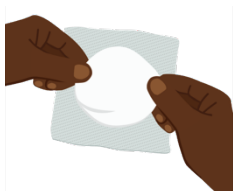
1. Hold the eyelashes of the upper eyelid with one hand
2. With the other hand, place a cotton bud or finger on the upper eyelid about halfway down
3. Use gentle and steady pressure downward with the cotton bud, and gently turn the eyelid up against this pressure
4. After you have finished, ask the person to look up and the eyelid will return to its normal position.

How to make and apply an eye cover

Eye pad

An eye pad is a soft cover that lies on top of the eyelids.

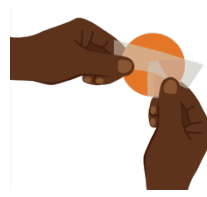
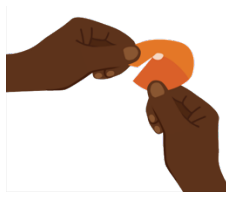
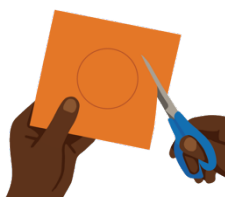
1. Place cotton wool between two pieces of gauze
2. Cut the cotton wool and gauze into an oval shape measuring approximately 5 x 6 centimetres
3. Stick a piece of adhesive tape about fifteen centimetres long to the eye pad
4. Ask the person to close both eyes and position the eye pad diagonally over the injured eye. Stick the tape to the person's forehead and cheek, and a further 1-2 pieces of tape to ensure the eye pad lies flat.



Eye shield

An eye shield is a firm cover that does not put any pressure on the eye.

1. Draw a circle on thin cardboard using a circular object and then cut around it
2. Make one cut into the centre about half the width of the circle
3. Make the cardboard into a cone shape
4. Secure the cone shape with adhesive tape
5. Stick one piece of tape to the cone and place it over the person's eye. Add another piece of tape to secure the eye shield over the eye.



The person should not rub their eyes or try to open their eyes under the eye cover.

How to remove a foreign body

Foreign bodies can range from a small particle like a seed or glass shard, to large objects piercing the eye.

Explain what you will do and ask the person to keep still:

1. Wet cotton buds with saline solution or cooled boiled water.
2. Look closely at the person's eye. If you cannot see the foreign body, turn the eyelid outward to check if there is anything on the inside of the eyelid.
3. Using the wet cotton bud, remove the foreign body with a gentle upward movement.
4. Show the foreign body to the person, this will reassure them that it has been removed.

If you cannot remove the foreign body, cover the eye and  refer to an eye health professional urgently.

Warning

Only try to remove foreign bodies that:

- You can see on the surface of the eye
- Do NOT pierce the eye
- Are NOT on the coloured part of the eye.

If you cannot see the foreign body, or it pierces the eye, or it is on the coloured part of the eye do not try to remove it. Cover the eye and  refer to an eye health professional urgently.

How to test pupil reactions and eye movements

Test a person's pupil reactions and eye movements when:

- They have had a knock or cut to their eye, and
- The skin and eyeball are not damaged, and
- They passed the distance vision screen.

Pupil reactions test	Pass result	Did not pass result
1. Dim the room lights 2. Ask the person to look at an object in the distance, such as the far wall 3. Look at size and shape of both pupils – they should be round and equal in size and shape 4. Shine a small torch into the right eye from about 10 centimetres away 5. Watch to see if both pupils quickly get smaller 6. Repeat steps 4-5 for the left eye.	Both pupils: • Round and equal in size • Quickly get smaller when light shines into them • Get bigger when the light is removed.	• Difference in size or shape between left and right pupil • The pupils get bigger or smaller very slowly •  Refer to an eye health professional urgently.
Eye movements test	Pass result	Did not pass result
1. Ask the person to keep their head still and follow your finger or pen with their eyes only 2. Move your finger or pen in an H-shaped pattern from left to right horizontally 3. Up and down on the left side 4. Left to right horizontally again 5. Up and down on the right side 6. While they are moving their eyes, ask if they develop any double vision 7. Watch for smoothness and amount of eye movements in all directions 8. Check whether the eyes looking in the same direction 9. Check for any limitations or slowness in movement.	• Both eyes easily follow your pen or finger • There are no limitations in the person's eye movements.	• Limited eye movement in one or both eyes • A difference in movement between the left and right eye • Eye movements are very slow •  Refer to an eye health professional urgently.