Using Eyedrops and Ointments correctly

Your optometrist may prescribe eyedrops and/or ointments for you to use to treat certain eye conditions, infections or diseases. Before you use these, be sure to tell your optometrist about any other prescription or non-prescription medications that you are taking or any allergies that you have.

Here are some general tips about correctly putting eyedrops in your eyes:

1. Always wash your hands before handling medications
2. Look at the ceiling by standing or sitting and tilting your head backwards. Some people like to lie down on a flat surface.
3. The best way to ensure the drop remains in your eye is to gently pull the skin of your lower eyelid between your thumb and index finger to create a "pocket" for the drop. If you are unable to master this, gently pull your lower lid down with your index finger.
4. Look up (so you are not looking directly at the bottle) and gently release a drop into the pocket of your eye. Keep the bottle's nozzle or the eyedropper clean by not touching it to any part of your eyes.
5. If you are unable to get the drop into your eye because of blinking, try this: Close your eye and pull the lower lid down. Aim the drop into the inside corner of your eye. Open your eye and let the drop run into your lower lid. (Be sure to try the open-eye method at your next scheduled dose as it is a more reliable way to ensure the drop remains in your eye).
6. To help keep the medication in your eye and prevent it from escaping through the tear duct, your optometrist may instruct you to "occlude" this duct by gently pressing on the inside corner of your closed eye with your index finger for about three minutes. If drops have been placed in both eyes, you can perform occlusion by placing your thumb and index finger (or the index fingers of both hands) on either side of your nose and gently pressing down on the inside corners of both closed eyes. This step is very important with some medications, so do not skip it if your optometrist specifies it.
7. Gently blot your closed eyes with a tissue to wipe away any excess drops.
8. If you use more than one kind of drop, wait at least five minutes between drops.

Here are some general tips about correctly putting ointment in your eyes.

1. Begin by expressing and discarding a ½cm of ointment from the tube at each use.
2. If applying to your eye's surface, form a pocket by gently pulling the skin of your lower eye-lid between your thumb and index finger to create a pocket for the ointment. Then express a ½cm to 1cm strip of ointment into the pocket (unless your optometrist prescribes a different amount).
3. Twist your wrist to break the strip of ointment from the tube.
4. After placing the ointment in your eye, blink or close your eyes briefly. Your body heat will melt the ointment so it can spread across the surface of your eyes.
5. If you are applying the ointment to the edges of your eyelids, express about a 1cm strip of ointment onto your finger and glide it across the length of your closed lids near the base of your lashes.
6. Use a soft, clean tissue to remove any excess ointment from the skin around your eyes. Be sure not to disturb the ointment placed in your eyes or on the edges of your eyes.

Be sure to follow all the instructions that your optometrist gives you and to complete the course of medication he or she prescribes. If you experience any side-effects, (such as burning, inflammation, puffiness, itching, etc.) call your optometrist immediately.