



The following information is provided to help you understand the use of Erythromycin Eye Ointment on your newborn.

## What is Erythromycin Eye Ointment?

Erythromycin eye ointment is an antibiotic put into the eyes of your baby after birth to try to prevent eye infection from germs.

## How Do These Germs get into the Baby's Eyes?

If *chlamydia*, a sexually transmitted germ, is in the birth canal during labour, it may get into, and infect the baby's eyes.

## Why is Erythromycin Ointment used?

Erythromycin ointment could help prevent an infection of the eyes or eyelids in the event the baby has been exposed to the germ when passing through the birth canal.

## Does my baby need Erythromycin Ointment?

Currently the Ontario Government requires that each baby's parents decide if they do or do not want their baby having this ointment. Unless you have "*high risk factors*", The Canadian Paediatric Society (CPS) states that erythromycin ointment is *not needed*.

## Babies with "*High Risk Factors*" are born to a birth parent with:

- High risk sexual behavior
- Chlamydia infection in the pregnancy
- No prenatal care during pregnancy
- A partner positive for a sexually transmitted germ
- No home address
- A new or multiple sexual partners or the partner has new or multiple sexual partners.

## After the birth of the baby, all parents should keep a look out for any eye problems that their baby may have.

References:

Adapted from: Brant Community Healthcare Systems Information sheet about "Erythromycin Eye Ointment for Babies."

Canadian Paediatric Society. (2019, February 19). Neonatal ocular prophylaxis: Shortage of erythromycin ophthalmic ointment for use in newborns. Canadian Paediatric Society. Retrieved April 5, 2023, from <https://cps.ca/en/media/neonatal-ocular-prophylaxis-shortage-of-erythromycin-ophthalmic-ointment-for-use-in-newborns>

Government of Ontario, Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. (2019, January 1). Traditional chinese medicine act, 2006 - legislation - MOHLTC. Health Protection and Promotion Act: Regulation 557 Communicable Diseases - General - Legislation - MOHLTC. Retrieved April 1, 2022, from [https://health.gov.on.ca/en/common/legislation/opth\\_neo/default.aspx](https://health.gov.on.ca/en/common/legislation/opth_neo/default.aspx)

Information  
Sheet about  
Erythromycin  
Eye Ointment  
for Babies  
Delivered at  
Huron Perth  
Healthcare  
Alliance

Developed by the  
Maternal Child  
Program



## How would I know if my baby has an infection of the eyes or eyelids?

Common symptoms of an eye or eyelid infection are:

- Eye redness
- Eye discharge that is yellow or green
- Pain and tenderness of the eye
- Swollen eye lids

## Can I choose to Opt-out?

Under Ontario law, all newborns must be given the erythromycin eye ointment, within one hour of birth unless a parent *ask or chooses not* give the eye ointment to their baby.

This information was developed to help you understand the use of Erythromycin Eye ointment after your baby is born but this information does not replace direction given to you by your health care provider. If you have any further questions, please ask your health care provider.

## Opt-Out Request

I understand the benefits of the eye ointment and what might happen if my baby does not get it. My Health Care Provider (nurse, doctor, midwife, pediatrician), has reviewed the benefits of administration, as well as the possible consequences of non-administration.

Please state any of the risk factors you feel are significant part of your medical history: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Witness Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Witness Name

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Information Sheet about Erythromycin Eye Ointment for Babies Delivered at Huron Perth Healthcare Alliance