

ERYTHROMYCIN OINTMENT

Severe infections in babies' eyes, also known as ophthalmia neonatorum, can happen anytime in the first month of life. Causes can be chemical, bacterial or viral. Some bacterial infections are from sexually-transmitted diseases, the most common of these being chlamydia. There can be serious consequences to transmitting STIs like chlamydia or gonorrhea to your baby.

Historically, babies' eyes were treated with a solution called silver nitrate drops. This was very irritating, and eventually was replaced with an antibiotic ointment called erythromycin. Nowadays, this treatment may no longer be useful. Some strains of gonorrhea have developed some resistance to the ointment, and it is now understood to be a poor prevention for transmission of chlamydia.

Instead, the Canadian Pediatric Association recommends that all pregnancies be screened for chlamydia and gonorrhea, and that infections in baby's eyes not caused by plugged ducts be tested and properly treated with intramuscular or intravenous antibiotics.