We have been contacted by multiple centers in the last month that have been cited for use of multi-dose eye drops on more than one patient. We want to arm our subscribers with the ammunition needed to support this practice when surveyors challenge it.

It is important to understand multi-dose vials are not the same as multi-dose eye drops. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) defines a multi-dose vial as a vial of liquid medication intended for parenteral administration (injection or infusion) that contains more than one dose of medication (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2011). An eye drop bottle does not meet this definition. Therefore position statements regarding the proper and safe use of multi-dose vials do not apply to multi-dose eye drops.

The Institute for Safe Medication Practices (ISMP) addressed the use of multi-dose eye drops as it relates to infection control in their Quarterly Action Agenda, April 5, 2012. “To reduce costs, ophthalmic specialty hospitals often have mandatory training, competency and monitoring programs to teach and validate safe eye drop administration” (Simmons, 2012). This position was reissued in Pharmacy Practice News annual report in June 2013.


A policy and procedural approach to eye drop administration must include at a minimum:

- Mandatory training, competency and monitoring
- Verification of patient allergies
- Verification of expiration date
- Three checks for medication confirmation
  1. When reaching for the container.
  2. After obtaining and comparing the container with the physician orders.
  3. When replacing the medication in the drawer or before administration to the patient.
- The Seven Rights of Medication Administration
  1. Right Patient
  2. Right Medication
  3. Right Dose
  4. Right Time
  5. Right Route
  6. Right Reason
  7. Right Documentation
Progressive Surgical Solutions
Use of Multi-dose Eye Drops

- Adherence to hand hygiene
- Patient explanation
- Proper administration using aseptic technique and without touching the patient, lid, lashes or surface of the eye
- Discarding of the medication if it comes in contact with patient during administration
- Proper labeling and storage of the open medication
- Medical record documentation
(American Society of Ophthalmic Registered Nurses, 2013)

An evidence based study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) Ophthalmology in December 2014 found that postop cataract surgery infection is affected by antibiotic susceptibility and antibiotic use, not by the use of a multi-dose eye drop policy (Jensen, Nahoopii, & Johnson, 2014). The Joint Commission issued a press release supporting a policy and procedural approach toward eye drop administration in conjunction with the publication of this article (Medical Xpress, 2014).


ASC surveyors have a wide breadth of experience. Not all come with a keen understanding and intimate knowledge of the ophthalmic ASC. The proper use of multi-dose eye drops is well supported by nationally recognized guidelines and standards. We have included a list of these references for your convenience and recommend you keep this easily accessible in case you need it. It is also available on Progressive eSupport. Alternatively you can attach this reference list to your eye drop administration policy and procedure.

As long as you adhere to a well-developed policy and procedure that includes mandatory training, competency evaluation and ongoing monitoring you should not be cited for an infection control deficiency. Be prepared to defend your practice. You are on solid ground!
References


