

Section: Division of Nursing  
Approval: \_\_\_\_\_  
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**\* PROCEDURE \***  
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HACKETTSTOWN REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER

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**NEWBORN SERVICES**  
(Scope)

**TITLE: OPHTHALMIC PROPHYLAXIS OF THE NEWBORN**

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**PURPOSE:** To outline the procedure for the prevention of infection to the baby's eyes acquired through labor and birth.

**SUPPORTIVE DATA:** Eye prophylaxis must be carried out within one hour of birth per New Jersey state law.

**EQUIPMENT:**

1. Erythromycin ophthalmic ointment (5mg individual tube)
2. Sterile 2x2 gauze sponges

|                 |   |   |
|-----------------|---|---|
| <b>CONTENT:</b> | <b>PROCEDURE STEPS:</b>   | <b>KEY POINTS:</b>  |
|                 | 1. Gently separate the eyelids and place a thin line of ointment, at least ½ inch along the lower eyelid. | Carefully manipulate lids to ensure spread of the ointment. Be careful not to touch eyelid or eyeball with tip of tube. |
|                 | 2. Repeat in second eye.  |   |
|                 | 3. After one minute, gently wipe excess ointment from eyelids and surrounding skin with gauze square.     | Do not irrigate eyes.   |
|                 | 4. Note date and time of administration in newborn medication administration record.                      |   |

References: AWHONN's Perinatal Nursing, Kathleen Rice Simpson, PHD, RNC, FAAN and Patricia Creehan MS,MA,RNC,ACCE, Chapter 14, Newborn Adaption to Extrauterine Life. Page 508, 2001