



CONJUNCTIVITIS (Pink Eye)

What is CONJUNCTIVITIS (Pink Eye)?

Conjunctivitis, most commonly known as Pink Eye, can be caused by bacterial or viral infection or by allergic reactions to dust, pollen and other materials.

What are the symptoms of conjunctivitis?

Bacterial and viral infections usually produce white or yellowish drainage that may cause the eyelids to stick together after sleep. The discharge in allergic conjunctivitis is often clear and watery. All types of infections usually involve redness, burning or itching.

How is conjunctivitis spread?

The germs that cause bacterial or viral conjunctivitis may be present in nasal secretions, as well as in the discharge from the eyes. Persons may become infected after touching a contaminated surface and then rubbing their eyes. Infection in one eye can easily spread to the other eye.

How is conjunctivitis treated?

Viral conjunctivitis – There is no specific treatment recommended. Over-the-counter eye drops may relieve some symptoms. Steroid eye drops should not be used.

Bacterial conjunctivitis – Antibiotic eye drops are indicated and will help limit spread and relieve symptoms. An individual is considered contagious until after treatment is administered for 24 hours. During this time, the infected individual should be excluded from work, school or daycare.

Allergic conjunctivitis – There is no specific treatment recommended. Over-the-counter eye drops may relieve symptoms.

What can I do to prevent becoming infected?

- Practice good handwashing.
- Avoid touching your eyes. If it is necessary to rub or touch the eyes, wash your hands.
- Avoid sharing personal items such as face towels, eye makeup and contact lenses.

Do any special precautions need to be taken for children in day care?

If a child in a daycare facility develops symptoms suggestive of Pink Eye:

- Contact the child's parents and ask them to have the child evaluated by a health care provider.
- Monitor the other children for signs of Pink Eye.
- Make sure all children and staff use good hand washing practices and hygiene, including proper use and disposal of tissues used for wiping the nose and eyes.
- Eliminate any shared items, such as cloth towels. Use disposable paper towels.
- Disinfect any items that may have been contaminated.
- Exclude children with a white or yellow discharge until their symptoms have disappeared or until 24 hours of treatment is administered, if diagnosed with bacterial conjunctivitis. Children with a watery eye drainage generally do not need to be excluded, but should be monitored for development of more serious symptoms.