

CONJUNCTIVITIS (PINK EYE) FACT SHEET

What is Pink Eye?

Conjunctivitis, or pink eye, is an irritation or infection on the white part of the eye. It can be caused by a bacterial or viral infection or by allergies.

What are the possible symptoms?

- Red eyes; eyelid swelling and pain.
- Increased tear production.
- Urge to rub eyes, itching or burning sensation.
- Discharge, crusting of eyelids or lashes especially in the morning.

VIRAL (very contagious)

- May also have cold-like symptoms, generally discharge is more watery.

BACTERIAL (very contagious)

- Generally discharge is more pus-like. It sometimes occurs with ear infection.

ALLERGIC (not contagious)

- Itching, tearing, swelling in eyes. May have other allergic symptoms such as an itchy nose or scratchy throat.

How is it spread?

- The air by coughing and sneezing.
- Touching a person, object or surface, then touching your eyes before washing your hands.

How can it be prevented?

- Wash hands frequently.
- Don't touch your eyes with unwashed hands.
- Wash hands before and after applying eye drops.
- Do not share personal items, such as pillows, washcloths, towels, eye drops, eye or face makeup, makeup brushes, contact lenses, contact lens storage cases, or eyeglasses.

How it is treated?

- See healthcare provider for diagnosis and possible treatment recommendations.
- With clean hands, wash any discharge from around your eye(s) several times a day using a clean, wet washcloth or fresh cotton ball. Throw away cotton balls after use, and wash used washcloths with hot water and detergent, then wash your hands again with soap and warm water.

Information for School and Daycare Providers

If pink eye is suspected, the child should see their healthcare provider for diagnosis and possible treatment recommendations as well as return to school guidance.

More Information: <http://www.cdc.gov/conjunctivitis>

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