

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 symptoms?

Symptoms may include:

- 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, discharge is usually more watery

BACTERIAL (very contagious)

- Discharge is usually more pus-like
- Sometimes occurs with ear infection

ALLERGIC (not contagious)

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

How can it be prevented?

- Wash hands often with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds.
- Avoid touching or rubbing your eyes.
- 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 is it spread?

- Through the air by coughing and sneezing
- By touching a person, object or surface, then touching your eyes before washing your hands.
- Through close personal contact, such as touching or shaking hands

How it is treated?

- 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.
- A doctor may prescribe antibiotics for a bacterial infection.

See healthcare provider for diagnosis and possible treatment recommendations.

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>

This FACT SHEET is for information only and is not meant to be used for self-diagnosis or as a substitute for consultation with a healthcare provider. For more information call your healthcare provider.

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