

Conjunctivitis (Pink eye)



Conjunctivitis is sometimes called pink eye. Often, it is an infection of the eye that can spread easily to others. Allergies, bacteria, or viruses may cause conjunctivitis.

Your child may have some or all of these problems in one or both eyes:

- Red, irritated eye(s)
- Burning, scratchy, or itchy eye(s)
- Watery eye(s)
- Thick, yellow mucous-like discharge that dries in crusts around the eyes
- Swollen eyelids

What to do for your child:

Have your child seen by his or her health care provider. Your child may need medicine that is put in the eye or taken by mouth.

If viruses cause the conjunctivitis, your child's body must fight off the infection on its own. Antibiotics do not kill viruses. Your child's health care provider may suggest eye drops that will help the eye feel better, but they won't kill the viruses.

Keep the eye clean by washing it often:

Use a clean face cloth and cool water every time. Wash the eye from the inside to the outside corner. You may want to try a no-tears baby shampoo to help clean the eyes.

Conjunctivitis spreads very easily! Here is what you can do so it is less likely to spread to other people:

Wash your hands well

- Before putting medicine in the eye

- After putting medicine in the eye
- Every time the eyes or face are touched

Have your child wash his or her hands often too – especially if the eyes are touched.

Wash anything touched by infected eyes such as clothes, towels, face cloths, and pillowcases.

Don't share towels, face cloths, or pillowcases.

Don't share make-up. Make-up that is old or shared may have germs in it that can cause conjunctivitis. Throw away any make-up your child may have used.

Don't touch or rub the infected eye.

Check with your child's health care provider if your child complains of:

- Problems seeing
- Severe eye pain
- Light hurting eyes
- The eye is not getting better after two to three days of using medicine
- Drainage from the eye continues after using all the medicine

Ask your child's health care provider when your child can return to school or child care.

Information from DHEC's Child Care and School Exclusion Lists: Exclude children with purulent conjunctivitis (defined as pink or red conjunctivae with white or yellow eye discharge, often with matted eyelids after sleep and eye pain or redness of the eyelids or skin surrounding the eye), until evaluated and treated. Non-purulent conjunctivitis (defined as pink conjunctivae with a clear watery eye discharge without fever, eye pain or eyelid redness) does not require exclusion from school. For additional information about exclusion when a child has conjunctivitis, see the DHEC Child Care and School Exclusion Lists of Contagious or Communicable Diseases at <http://www.scdhec.gov/health/disease/exclusion.htm>



<http://www.scdhec.gov/health/mch/wcs>

Bureau of Maternal & Child Health • Division of Women & Children's Services • CR-008084 11/07

Child's Name _____

School Nurse _____

Date _____

School _____

School Phone Number (_____) _____