

# Pink Eye (Conjunctivitis) Guidelines

## WHAT IS CONJUNCTIVITIS?

Conjunctivitis, or pink eye, is an irritation or inflammation of the conjunctiva, which covers the white part of the eyeball. It can be caused by allergies or a bacterial or viral infection.

## COMMON SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

- Pain in affected eye
- Redness of eye and / or eyelid
- Irritation, dryness
- Discharge, watery eye
- Itchiness
- Swollen lining of eye, puffy eye
- Congestion
- Runny nose, sneezing
- Sensitivity to light

## CONTAGIOUS TIME PERIOD:

While signs and symptoms are present.

## TIME FROM EXPOSURE TO SYMPTOMS:

Variable depending on the causative organism.

## SPREAD BY:

Direct or indirect contact with eye discharge. Highly contagious.

## TREATMENT / SELF-CARE:

It often resolves on its own, but treatment can speed the recovery process. Allergic conjunctivitis can be treated with antihistamines. Bacterial conjunctivitis can be treated with antibiotic eye drops. Use a cold compress to reduce inflammation and dull sensation of pain. Use artificial tears to provide soothing relief.

## ACTION AT SCHOOL:

Exclude the child from school until fever-free (99.9 F or below) for 24 hours without the use of any fever reducing medications. Ensure the student understands they are contagious by touching their affected eye and are able to keep their hands away from their eyes. No proof of treatment or medical care is needed to return to school.

## CONSIDERATIONS AND PREVENTION MEASURES:

Good handwashing and hygiene. Avoid wearing contacts while symptoms last. Use proper disinfectant on surfaces.



NORMAL

In a healthy eye, the sclera is majority white with only a few small blood vessels visible. There is an adequate tear film, with no significant discharge or watering.



BACTERIAL

A red eye with a sticky yellow/green discharge. Eyelids may be stuck together upon waking. Can affect one or both eyes. Usually spread by direct contact only.



VIRAL

The type of conjunctivitis most commonly associated with the term 'pink eye'. Appearance: red, itchy, watery eye. Can affect one or both eyes. Highly contagious.



ALLERGIC

Very similar in appearance to viral conjunctivitis, but accompanied by nasal congestion, sneezing, eyelid swelling and sensitivity to light. Both eyes are affected. Not contagious.