Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)

**WHAT IS IT?**

Conjunctivitis, also known as pink eye, is an inflammation of the conjunctiva. Inflammation makes blood vessels more visible and gives the eye a pink or reddish color.

*Most cases of conjunctivitis are mild and get better on their own, even without treatment.*

**WHAT CAUSES IT?**

The four main causes of conjunctivitis include viruses, bacteria, allergens and irritants. Most cases in adults are viral.

Symptoms may include:

- Redness or swelling of the white of the eye or inside the eyelids
- Increased amount of tears
- Eye discharge which may be clear, yellow, white or green
- Itchy, irritated, and/or burning eyes
- Increased sensitivity to light
- Gritty feeling in the eye
- Crusting of the eyelids or lashes

**WHEN TO SEEK MEDICAL CARE**

- Moderate to severe pain in your eye(s)
- Sensitivity to light or blurred vision
- *Intense* redness in the eye(s)
- A weakened immune system, for example from HIV, autoimmune disorder or cancer treatment
- Symptoms that get worse or don't improve
- Pre-existing eye conditions that may put you at risk for complications or severe infection

**SELF CARE**

- If you wear contact lenses, remove them and keep them out until the redness is gone. Discard disposable (daily, weekly, monthly) lenses and contact lens case.
- Do not rub eyes, rubbing eyes can make symptoms worse.
- Place a cool compress over your eyes for comfort as well as to remove discharge.
- Avoid touching your eyes. Wash hands frequently.
- Do not use eye make-up when you have symptoms. Discard recently used mascara.
- Avoid sharing towels, bedding, or other personal items such as make-up.
- Over the counter medications: **CAUTION: Always follow package instructions.**
  - Lubricant eye drops (Thera Tears, Refresh, Systane)
  - Antihistamine eye drops (Visine A, Naphcon A, Zaditor)

The information presented here is not intended to be used for the diagnosis of a health problem or as a substitute for consulting a licensed medical professional.

Contact Health Services if you have any additional questions, concerns or to make an appointment.

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The Wellness Center at University Crossing
978-934-6800
http://www.uml.edu/student-services/Wellness-Center