

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.