

Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)

Conjunctivitis is a superficial inflammation of the eye. It may be caused by environmental irritants, allergy, or infection which may be viral or bacterial.

Your child may experience itching, redness, watering, or draining of one or both eyes. Following sleep the eyelids may stick together.

Children rub their itchy eyes, collect the drainage, and spread conjunctivitis to others. Schools and day care centers will not permit children to attend with conjunctivitis unless they are being treated with antibiotics. Keeping the hands washed, eyes wiped clean, and using antibiotic eye drops (when indicated) will help prevent spread. Viral conjunctivitis usually lasts 3-7 days.

Treatment includes:

- * Cleansing the eyes with a warm damp washcloth or cotton balls.
- * Using a soothing eye drop such as artificial tears.
- * Using antibiotic eye drops if the drainage becomes thick and pus-like.
- * These drops may be prescribed over the phone if over 3 months of age.

An office visit is indicated if your child has a high fever, significant swelling of the eye, or complains of pain, decreased vision, or unusual sensitivity to light.