



## Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)

**How to recognize:** Conjunctiva (white portion of the eye) or inside of the eyelid appears pink or red due to inflammation.

### Types:

- Infectious: bacterial, viral (most common)
- Non-Infectious (Allergic-usually occurs in both eyes, sx may include sneezing, scratchy throat, or asthma, toxic, or non-specific)

\*Highly contagious and is spread through contact with eye drainage\*

### Screening questions

Question	Yes	No	Action if "Yes"
Patient less than 1 year old			To be assessed by physician in clinic
Is the patient immunocompromised?			To be assessed by physician in clinic
Severe pain present?			To be assessed by physician in clinic
Severe visual changes or photophobia?			To be assessed by physician in clinic
Recent treatment for conjunctivitis?			If longer than 10 days, to be assessed by physician in clinic
Was the patient recently sick?			Follow recommendations listed below
In children, recent ear infection?			Follow recommendations listed below
Does the patient usually wear contact lenses?			Refrain from use until sx subside
Is there a discharge present?			Assess consistency of discharge. Is it unilateral/bilateral.
If discharge is present, is it clear?			Likely viral, may appear in one eye or spread to both. With viral, pus does not appear spontaneously and continuously at the lid margin and in the corners of the eye
Is there a burning, sandy, or a gritty feeling in the eye?			Likely viral. Assess if there is morning crusting followed by watery discharge, perhaps with some scant mucus throughout the day.
Is discharge pus-like, grey or yellow?			Likely bacterial, requires prescription for eye drops or ointment. Should be assessed in clinic by physician/pharmacist



Does the discharge reappear within minutes of wiping it?			Likely bacterial, requires prescription for eye drops or ointment. Should be assessed in clinic by physician/pharmacist
History of allergies? Is there bilateral redness and itchiness?			Likely due to allergies. Itching is the cardinal symptom of an allergy etiology.
Recent exposure to chemicals/smoke?			Remove irritant

### **Treatment:**

Viral pink eye- reassure the patient that symptoms will usually get worse for the first three to five days, with a very gradual resolution over the following one to two weeks for a total course of two to three weeks. Like when a patient has a cold and may have morning coughing and nasal congestion two weeks after symptoms first arise, patients with viral conjunctivitis may have morning crusting two weeks after the initial symptoms, although the daytime redness, irritation, and tearing should be much improved. If symptoms persist after 10 days, they should be assessed in clinic by a physician.

Daily care; Recommend using a clean and warm wet cloth 3-4x/ day for relief and to remove crust. Bacterial- Should be assessed in clinic by physician/pharmacist as the patient may require eyedrops or ointment. Symptoms will subside usually within 2-3 days after starting treatment. Allergic- advise the patient that rubbing the eye/eyes will cause further irritation/symptoms (ie. Watering of eyes, nasal congestion). May use OTC artificial teardrops/ antihistamine eye drops to help reduce sx. If chronic occurrence, referral to optometrist is recommended. Chemical- remove the cause of irritation

### **Tips to reduce the spread of infection:**

- Wash your hands before and after you touch your eyes/face or use medicine in your eyes.
- Do not share eye makeup.
- Do not share contact lens equipment, containers, or solutions.
- Do not share eye medicine.
- Do not share towels, bed linens, pillows, or handkerchiefs. Use clean linens, towels, and face cloths each day.

\* For those who suffer from seasonal allergies, consult with an optometrist to recommend the best therapy to provide relief\*



\*A person can usually return to daycare, school, or work 24 hours after an antibiotic has been started if symptoms have improved. Otherwise, people with pink eye should stay at home until their symptoms are gone.

## References

[https://www.optometrists.ab.ca/AAO/Patients/Eye\\_Health\\_Library/Conjunctivitis\\_Pink\\_Eye\\_.asp](https://www.optometrists.ab.ca/AAO/Patients/Eye_Health_Library/Conjunctivitis_Pink_Eye_.asp)  
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<https://myhealth.alberta.ca/Health/Pages/conditions.aspx?hwid=za1092>

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<https://www.cdc.gov/conjunctivitis/index.html>

[https://www.uptodate.com/contents/conjunctivitis?search=conjunctivitis&source=search\\_result&selectedTitle=1%7E150&usage\\_type=default&display\\_rank=1](https://www.uptodate.com/contents/conjunctivitis?search=conjunctivitis&source=search_result&selectedTitle=1%7E150&usage_type=default&display_rank=1)

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