

# Pink Eye

Conjunctivitis is a common eye condition among both children and adults. Conjunctivitis is also called "pink eye." It is defined as inflammation (swelling) of the conjunctiva, a transparent tissue that lines the eyeball and inside of the eyelid and keeps these areas moist. When the conjunctiva is inflamed, it often looks red or pink. Conjunctivitis can be caused by different types of bacteria, viruses and even eye irritants (shampoo, air pollution or chlorine that is often present in swimming pools). Conjunctivitis is not a serious condition if managed promptly.

How can you tell if you have conjunctivitis or pink eye? Common symptoms include:

- redness/pinkness of the white layer of the eye or the inner layer of the eyelid.
- watery/itchy eyes if caused by an allergen (agent that causes allergies).
- burning of the eyes.
- blurred vision and increased sensitivity to light.
- a yellowish discharge from the eye that persists throughout the day and forms a crust over the eyelashes, especially after sleep (only when caused by bacteria).

Conjunctivitis is contagious if it is bacterial or

viral, which means the infection can be spread easily to others. So how can you prevent spreading it to others?

- Avoid touching or rubbing the infected eye (wash hands with soap and warm water if an infected site has been touched)
- If you have discharge from your eyes, wash the discharge using fresh wet cotton balls and discard (wash hands after the procedure)
- Avoid eye makeup and contact lenses
- Wash bed linens and towels used by the infected person with hot water and detergent
- Do not share towels or glasses
- Do not share eye drops
- If you know that your child has bacterial/viral conjunctivitis, keep your child home until he/she recovers

If you have conjunctivitis, these nondrug measures can be used to relieve symptoms:

- Protect your eyes from allergens
- Do not wear contact lenses
- Place cold compresses over the eyes
- Wash face and eyelids with mild soap and rinse afterward

If you need more information, ask your pharmacist.