

Title: Symptoms, causes, and treatments of conjunctivitis.

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Abstract: Conjunctivitis, as known as "pink eye", is an infection or irritation of the conjunctiva caused by a virus, bacteria, allergies, or chemical exposure. Many patients do not know what causes conjunctivitis and assume all cases need treatment with antibiotics. This hand-out discusses causes, symptoms, and treatments for conjunctivitis.

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What is Conjunctivitis?

Conjunctivitis, also known as “pink eye”, is an infection or irritation of the conjunctiva, or membranes around your eyelids. The blood vessels in your eye become irritated and swollen and cause your eye to look pink.



Conjunctivitis gives the eye a reddish color commonly known as “pink eye”.

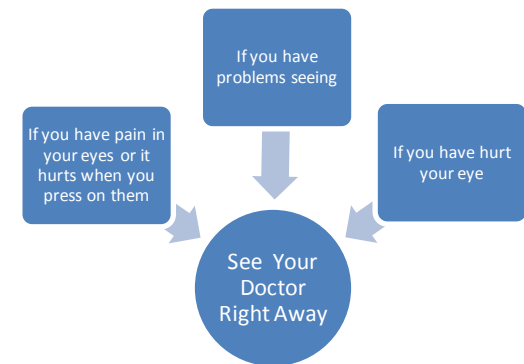
What are the symptoms of conjunctivitis?

- Redness in one or both eyes
- Itchiness in one or both eyes
- Gluey or sticky eyelashes or eyelids in the morning
- Pus or watery drainage from one or both eyes
- Gritty feeling in one or both eyes

What causes conjunctivitis?

It is most often caused by a virus or bacteria, but can also be caused by allergies or chemicals used around the eyes. Conjunctivitis can be spread very easily from person to person.

How do I know if I need to see the doctor right away?



How can I prevent the spread of conjunctivitis?

- Don't touch or rub your eye(s).
- Wash your hands often with soap and warm water and always after touching your face or eyes.
- Wash your bed sheets, pillowcases, and towels in hot water and soap.
- Don't wear eye makeup.
- Don't share eye makeup with anyone else.
- Never wear another person's contact lens.
- Wear glasses instead of contact lenses. Throw away or clean contacts you have already worn.
- Avoid sharing things such as dirty towels, cups, and glasses.
- Wash your hands after using the eye drops or ointment to your eye or your child's eye.

- Do not use eye drops in an eye that is not infected.

How is conjunctivitis treated?

Most causes of conjunctivitis will get better on its own and will not need antibiotics to heal. A recent study shows that it is helpful for patients to wait 3 days before starting medication to see if they get better on their own. The system of “delayed” medication helps to lower the overall use of antibiotics by people who don't need them.



It is a little known fact that most people with conjunctivitis will get better on their own and do not need antibiotic eye drops.