

## Conjunctivitis

(Source: MayoClinic.org)

Pink eye (conjunctivitis) is an inflammation or infection of the transparent membrane (conjunctiva) that lines your eyelid and covers the white part of your eyeball. When small blood vessels in the conjunctiva become inflamed, they're more visible. This is what causes the whites of your eyes to appear reddish or pink. Though pink eye can be irritating, it rarely affects your vision.

People who wear contact lenses need to stop wearing their contacts as soon as pink eye symptoms begin and should dispose of those contacts to prevent future reinfection.

Common causes of pink eye include viruses, bacteria, and allergies.

### Viral and bacterial conjunctivitis

Viral conjunctivitis and bacterial conjunctivitis may affect one or both eyes. Both viral conjunctivitis and bacterial conjunctivitis produce yellow-green discharge. Both viral and bacterial conjunctivitis can be associated with colds or with symptoms of a respiratory infection, such as a sore throat. Both viral and bacterial types are contagious. They are spread through direct or indirect contact with the eye secretions of someone who's infected.

**If there is redness and swelling of the area around the eye and/or you are wiping discharge from the eye on an hourly basis there is more concern for a bacterial infection.**

**Viral Treatment:** There is no treatment for most cases of viral conjunctivitis. Instead, the virus needs time to run its course — from a few days up to two weeks. Viral conjunctivitis often begins in one eye and then infects the other eye within a few days. Your signs and symptoms should gradually clear on their own. Occasionally a viral conjunctivitis can develop into a bacterial conjunctivitis. **Viral conjunctivitis can return to school at any time per the American Academy of Pediatrics guidelines.**

**Bacterial Treatment:** If your infection is suspected to be bacterial, your doctor may prescribe antibiotic eye drops as pink eye treatment, and the infection should go away within several days. In general, bacterial conjunctivitis can return to school once the discharge from the eye has concluded with proper treatment.

### Allergic conjunctivitis

Allergic conjunctivitis affects both eyes and is a response to an allergy-causing substance such as pollen. If you have allergic conjunctivitis, you may experience intense itching, tearing and inflammation of the eyes — as well as sneezing and watery nasal discharge. Most allergic conjunctivitis can be controlled with allergy eye drops. When possible avoid whatever causes your allergies.

**Allergy Eye Drops:** Generally 1 drop in each eye 1 to 2 times a day is all that is needed for your eyes. These should be used as needed (when your eyes are red or itchy) and not on a daily basis. If you notice increasing discharge, swelling, redness, pain, or fever, then please contact our office. There are over-the-counter brands called **Pataday**, **Patanol**, **Zaditor**, or **Alaway** which are all effective.