

Emergency Department

Eye Infection (Conjunctivitis)

General Information

Conjunctivitis, also known as pink eye, is an inflammation of the inside of the eyelid and the membrane which covers the white part of the eye. Conjunctivitis can be caused by infection, chemical irritation, allergy or contact lenses. The most common symptoms are clear, green or yellow discharge from the eye, swollen eyelids, redness, gritty or scratchy feeling in the eye and/or pain.

Instructions

1. You may use cool compresses to reduce discomfort. Clean your eye with a warm washcloth.
 2. Conjunctivitis is contagious. Do not share your washcloth with anyone else, and do not use this cloth for washing/bathing.
 3. Wash your hands with soap and water, particularly after touching your eye. Use paper towels to dry.
 4. **DO NOT** touch or rub your eyes.
 5. Gently wipe away any discharge from the eyes with tissues and discard.
 6. Sunglasses may be helpful if light bothers your eyes.
 7. **DO NOT** use eye makeup until the conjunctivitis has gone. Discard current mascara, replace with new makeup.
 8.
 - If eye drop medications have been prescribed by the doctor - pull down the lower lid of the eye needing the drops, drop 1-2 drops in the center of the lower lid. Blink to spread the medication.
 - If eye ointments have been ordered by the doctor - pull down on the lower lid, look up and then apply a small thin line of medicine from the inner eye out. Blink slowly to spread the solution.
- *DO NOT** touch medication container to eye.
9. If you wear contact lenses, stop wearing them until your eyes are completely healed
 10. For bacterial conjunctivitis, you may return to school or work 24 hours after you begin the medication, unless your doctor tells you differently.

continued..

See your Family Doctor if any of the following develop

- The eye is still pink three days after starting treatment with medicine.
- Increased eye pain.
- The redness is spreading or you develop a fever.
- Blurred vision.
- Fever occurs.
- Eye pain or sensitivity to light.

For more information or questions contact HealthLinkBC at 811.

For more copies, go online at <http://vch.eduhealth.ca> or email phe@vch.ca and quote Catalogue No. **FH.650.Ey31**
© Vancouver Coastal Health, November 2015

The information in this document is intended solely for the person to whom it was given by the health care team.
www.vch.ca