

## Where Can I Get More Help or Ask Questions?

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For more information, contact your family or eye doctor, 811, BC HealthLink website, or the Vancouver Coastal Health Infection Prevention and Control website ([ipac.vch.ca](http://ipac.vch.ca)).

BC HealthLink website:  
[healthlinkbc.ca/](http://healthlinkbc.ca/)

## Pink Eye

Epidemic  
Keratoconjunctivitis (EKC)



Making better  
decisions together  
with patients  
and families

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## What is Epidemic Keratoconjunctivitis<sup>1</sup>?

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Epidemic keratoconjunctivitis (EKC), is a serious viral infection of the eyes. It can cause painful inflammation (redness) of the eye and may cause blurred vision. The virus is easily passed on to another person and can quickly become widespread (epidemic).

## Symptoms

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Symptoms include: redness, swelling, sensitivity to light, itching, the sensation of something in the eye, or gritty feeling, excessive tearing, and crusting of the eyelids or eyelashes. It can be associated with signs of an upper respiratory infection – stuffy and/or runny nose, sneezing, sore throat, coughing, and difficulty swallowing. Eye pain and decreased or blurry vision can occur in severe cases.

## When did I get it? How long does it last?

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You can develop symptoms within three to fourteen days of exposure to EKC. Improvement of your eye infection may take anywhere from 7-21 days.

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<sup>1</sup> *Kerato (cornea), conjunctiva (mucous membrane covering the eye), - itis (inflammation)*

## Can I Pass it to Someone Else?

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Yes you can. EKC is very contagious. Contact with pus or discharge from an infected eye, or with something that has touched an infected eye (e.g., pillowcase, sunglasses) can easily spread this infection to your friends and family.

## How Can I Stop the Spread?

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If you or someone you know has EKC...

### **DO**

- ✓ See a doctor to assess severity of the infection, obtain a swab of your eye(s) to determine if it is a bacterial or viral infection, and to determine the treatment plan for it.
- ✓ Let your doctor's office know that you have EKC or that you have been in contact with someone who has EKC.
- ✓ Tell your employer that you have EKC or that you have been in contact with someone who has EKC.
- ✓ Return to work when doctor advises you it is okay to.
- ✓ Discard soft contact lenses and makeup used within 7 days of symptom onset.

- ✓ Clean your hands well with alcohol-based sanitizer or soap and warm water frequently and immediately after:



- ▶ Touching your eyes.
- ▶ Wiping your tears.
- ▶ Blowing your nose.

- ✓ Frequently clean hard surfaces that the person with EKC has touched with a household disinfectant.

### **DO NOT**

- ✗ Touch or rub your eyes. This can worsen the condition or spread it to the other eye.
- ✗ Share personal care items such as...
  - ▶ Eye drops, contact-lens solutions, eye make-up or containers.
  - ▶ Towels or bedding.
  - ▶ Eyeglasses (including sunglasses).
  - ▶ Use the same eye products for your infected and non-infected eye.
- ✗ Go to public swimming pools or hot tubs.
- ✗ Go to day-care centres.
- ✗ Use contact lenses or eye make-up until doctor says it is okay.