

Advice For Patients With Viral Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)

What is it?

Pink eye or conjunctivitis (pronounced kon-junk-tiv-ait-is) is an inflammation or infection of the transparent membrane (conjunctiva) that lines your eyelid and the white part of your eyeball. When small blood vessels in the conjunctiva become inflamed, your eye looks red.

Pink eye is often caused by a bacteria or virus, or by an allergic reaction. It can affect one or both eyes. Symptoms of pink eye include redness, itchiness, tearing, and a gritty feeling. Sometimes you have a crust formed on your eye when you wake up in the morning.

What should I do?

Pink eye can be irritating, but it rarely affects your vision. If you are uncomfortable, use a cold wet washcloth on your closed eyes. Try moisturizing eye drops to help your eyes feel better.

Make an appointment with your doctor if you think you have pink eye. Pink eye can be very contagious for two weeks after symptoms begin. Early diagnosis and treatment help ease the discomfort of pink eye and can help keep it from spreading. In addition, other serious diseases can cause pink eye. If your eyes are painful or sensitive to light, or if your vision is blurred, see your family doctor immediately or go to the nearest hospital Emergency Room.

How can I keep from spreading pink eye?

Because pink eye spreads very easily, there are some things you can do to protect the people around you.

- Do not touch your eyes or face
- If you touch your eyes or face by mistake, always wash your hands with soap or use hand sanitizer right away
- Do not share food or drink
- Do not share anything that might have touched your face or lips. For example, do not share: towels, facecloths, handkerchiefs, pillows, sunglasses, lipstick, cups, water bottles, forks, spoons, knives for eating, chopsticks, toothbrushes, and toothpaste, etc
- If you use a tissue for your eyes or face, make sure you throw it away immediately and wash your hands. (There are germs in the tissue.)
- Throw out any contact lenses or make-up used up to 7 days before you got pink eye. (There would be germs in them.)



This material has been reviewed and approved by patients, families and staff.



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