

LIBERTY OPTHALMOLOGY

Conjunctivitis (Pinkeye)

Conjunctivitis, also known as pinkeye, is an inflammation of the conjunctiva, the thin, clear tissue that lies over the white part of the eye and lines the inside of the eyelid

What Causes Pinkeye?

Pinkeye has a number of different causes, including:

- Viruses
- Bacteria (such as gonorrhea or chlamydia)
- Irritants such as shampoos, dirt, smoke, and pool chlorine
- Allergies, like dust, pollen, or a special type of allergy that affects some contact lens wearers

Pinkeye caused by some bacteria and viruses can spread easily from person to person, but are not a serious health risk if diagnosed promptly. Pinkeye in newborn babies, however, should be reported to a doctor immediately.

What Are the Symptoms of Pinkeye?

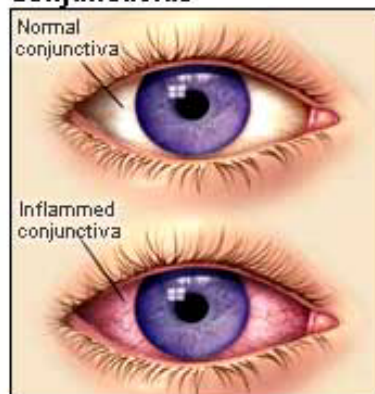
The symptoms of pinkeye differ based on the cause of the inflammation, but may include:

- Redness in the white of the eye or inner eyelid.
- Increased amount of tears.
- Thick yellow discharge that crusts over the eyelashes, especially after sleep.
- Green or white discharge from the eye.
- Itchy eyes.
- Burning eyes.
- Blurred vision.
- Increased sensitivity to light.

See your eye doctor if you have any of these symptoms of pinkeye. He or she will conduct an exam of your eyes and may take a sample of fluid from the eyelid using a cotton swab to be analyzed in a lab. Bacteria or viruses that may have caused conjunctivitis, including a sexually transmitted disease or STD, can then be identified and proper treatment prescribed.

How Is Pinkeye Treated?

Conjunctivitis



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The treatment for pinkeye depends on the cause.

Bacteria - Pinkeye caused by bacteria, including STDs, is treated with antibiotics, in the form of eye drops, ointments, or pills. Eye drops or ointments may need to be applied to the inside of the eyelid three to four times a day for five to seven days. Pills may need to be taken for several days. The infection should improve within a week. Take the medicine as instructed by your doctor, even if the symptoms go away.

Viruses - This type of pinkeye often results from the viruses that cause a common cold. Just as a cold must run its course, so must this form of pinkeye, which usually lasts from four to seven days. Viral conjunctivitis can be highly contagious. Avoid contact with others and wash hands frequently.

Conjunctivitis (Pinkeye) (continued)

Irritants - For pinkeye caused by an irritating substance, use water to wash the substance from the eye for five minutes. Your eyes should begin to improve within four hours after washing away the substance. If the conjunctivitis is caused by acid or alkaline material such as bleach, call your doctor.

Allergies - Allergy-associated conjunctivitis should improve once the allergy is treated and the allergen removed. See your doctor if you have conjunctivitis that is linked to an allergy.

What Can I Do to Relieve Symptoms of Pinkeye?

To relieve the symptoms of pinkeye:

- Protect your eyes from dirt and other irritating substances.
- Avoid the use of makeup.
- Remove contact lenses, if you wear them.
- Non-prescription "artificial tears," a type of eye drops, may help relieve itching and burning from the irritating substances causing your pinkeye. However, other types of eye drops may irritate the eyes and should not be used. Note: Do not use the same bottle of drops in an uninfected eye.

How Can I Prevent Spreading Pinkeye?

If you or your child has pinkeye:

- Don't touch or rub the infected eye(s).
- Wash your hands often with soap and warm water.
- Wash any discharge from your eyes several times a day using a fresh cotton ball or paper towel. Afterwards, discard the cotton ball or paper towel and wash your hands with soap and warm water.
- Wash your bed linens, pillowcases, and towels in hot water and detergent.
- Avoid wearing eye makeup.
- Don't share eye makeup with anyone.
- Never wear another person's contact lenses.
- Wear eyeglasses instead of contact lenses. Throw away disposable lenses or be sure to clean extended wear lenses and all eyewear cases.
- Avoid sharing common articles such as unwashed towels and glasses.
- Wash your hands after applying the eye drops or ointment to your eye or your child's eye.
- Do not use eye drops in a non-infected eye that were used for an infected one.
- If your child has bacterial or viral pinkeye, keep your child home from school or day care until he or she is no longer contagious.

What Are the Complications of Pinkeye?

Usually, pinkeye is a self-limited disease, either clearing up on its own or after a course of antibiotics. However, certain forms of conjunctivitis can become serious and become sight-threatening. They include conjunctivitis caused by gonorrhea or chlamydia.

How Can I Avoid Getting Pinkeye?

Viral pinkeye is highly contagious. However, maintaining proper hygiene such as frequent hand washing should minimize transmission. With regards to allergic conjunctivitis, avoiding allergens and taking proper care of your contact lenses can help reduce your risk. If someone in your household has pinkeye, be sure to wash your hands often and thoroughly. Avoid sharing washcloths, towels, pillowcases, mascara, or eyeliner with them. Eye drops are commonly given to treat conjunctivitis.

For more information about Conjunctivitis (Pinkeye), please call Dr. Lothes at (614) 841-9300 to set up and examination and consultation.