



Pink Eye (Conjunctivitis)

What is it?

- Pinkeye is an infection of the covering of the eyeball and the inside of the eyelid.
- Pink eye is most often caused by viral infections associated with the common cold. It can also be caused by bacterial infections or allergies.

Children with bacterial pink eye should take antibiotic drops or ointment. These are not needed for viral pink eye.

- Viral and bacterial pink eye are contagious.
- Pink eye should not cause any long term damage to a child's vision.
- Seek medical attention if there is a change in vision, persistent redness, eye pain, or eyelid swelling.

Signs and Symptoms?

- Complaints of a scratchy feeling or pain in their eyes and may have a lot of tears and pus discharge.
- The infection turns the whites of the eyes pink or red.
- When the child wakes up after a sleep, pus or discharge often makes the eyelids stick together.
- The time of contact to the time of first symptoms is usually 12 to 24 hours.

Your child may have:

- eye and inner eyelid redness
- slightly swollen eyelids
- itchy eyes
- clear or yellow-green eye discharge

Viral pink eye usually affects both eyes. Your child may also have other cold symptoms.

Bacterial pink eye often affects only one eye at first. You will be able to see yellow or green discharge.

Allergic pink eye may occur when your child is allergic to something in the environment. Your child may have a ragweed pollen, tree pollen, grass or animal allergy. It affects both eyes and there is little or no discharge. Your child may have itchy and watery eyes.

How is it spread?

- Pinkeye is spread by droplets from the nose or throat of an infected person.
- It can also be spread by contact with the discharge from infected eyes, either by the infected person touching the discharge and then another person, or by the uninfected person touching the discharge and then touching their own eye(s).
- A person is contagious throughout the course of active infection or until 24 hours after antibiotic treatment has been started.



How to decrease the spread?

- Hand washing prior to touching your face is the best way to decrease the risk of exposure.

Recommended absence:

Persons who have pinkeye should be absent from work, school or daycare until 24 hours after antibiotic treatment has been started or as directed by the healthcare provider if antibiotics are not prescribed

Conjunctivitis is **not** be reported to the Medical Officer of Health as required by the Health Promotion and Protection Act.

Resources:

About Kids Health
www.aboutkidshealth.ca
 Caring for Kids
www.caringforkids.cps.ca

Update November 2022

