

# PINKEYE FACT SHEET



## What is pinkeye?

The inflammation (redness, swelling) of the thin tissue covering the white part of the eye and the inside of the eyelids.

## What are the signs and symptoms?

### Bacterial

The eye is red or pink, itchy, and painful. There may be green or yellow discharge. The infected eye may be crusted shut in the morning. It may affect one or both eyes.

### Viral

The eye is pink, swollen, watering, and may be sensitive to light. May affect only one eye.

### Allergic

Itching, redness, excessive tearing, usually affects both eyes.

### Chemical

Red, watery eyes, especially after swimming in chlorine water.

## How is it spread?

A person's hands become contaminated by direct contact with discharge from an infected eye, or by touching other surfaces that are contaminated by secretions that get into the eye. Bacterial conjunctivitis is no longer contagious when medication is started, or the symptoms are no longer present. Viral conjunctivitis often occurs with a viral respiratory tract disease that has other signs and symptoms such as fever, sore throat, and respiratory tract symptoms. One type of viral conjunctivitis, adenovirus, may remain contagious for weeks after signs and symptoms appear. This strain of virus can cause outbreaks. If two or more children become infected within the same time frame, please contact your local health department. Antibiotics for this condition do help the patient or reduce spread. Allergic and chemical conjunctivitis are not contagious.

## How do you keep it from spreading?

Use good hand hygiene after eyes, nose or mouth. Sanitize objects that are commonly touched by hands or faces, such as tables, doorknobs, telephones, cuddle blankets, toys. Consult a health professional for diagnosis and treatment.

## Pinkeye in a group setting

Report the issue to the person in charge of illness. Review hand hygiene and sanitation technique. A health professional should be consulted about diagnosis and treatment. Documentation from the health care professional is not needed. Complete all medication as directed.

## Exclusion

Is not necessary unless a child is unable to participate in a group setting and compromises the health of other children in the group, if there is fever, behavior changes, or if other exclusion criteria is met. Antibiotics are not required to return. It is helpful to think of pink eye as the common cold. It may be passed on to others, but resolves without treatment. We do not exclude for the common cold. Good hand hygiene is the best prevention.