

SELF-CARE

Practicing good hygiene is the best way to control the spread of conjunctivitis. Once an infection has been diagnosed, follow these steps:

- Don't touch your eyes with your hands.
- Wash your hands thoroughly and frequently.
- Change your pillowcase.
- Change your towel and washcloth daily, and don't share them with others.
- Discard eye cosmetics, particularly mascara.
- Don't use anyone else's eye cosmetics or personal eye-care items.
- Follow your eye doctor's instructions on proper contact lens care.
- If you have disposable contact lens, discard lens you have been wearing.
- Do not wear contact lens until symptoms are gone for 48 hours.

You can soothe the discomfort of viral or bacterial conjunctivitis by applying warm compresses to your affected eye or eyes. To make a compress, soak a clean cloth in warm water and wring it out before applying it gently to your closed eyelids.

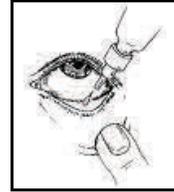
For allergic conjunctivitis, avoid rubbing your eyes. Instead of warm compresses, use cool compresses to soothe your eyes. Over the counter eye drops are available. Antihistamine eye drops should help to alleviate the symptoms, and lubricating eye drops help to rinse the allergen off of the surface of the eye.

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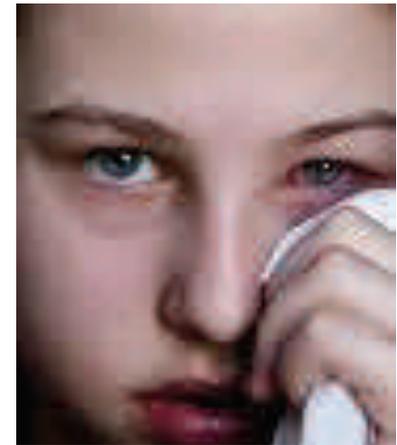
HOW TO USE EYEDROPS

A helpful guide to using any type of eye drops.

- Wash your hands with soap and warm water and dry them.
- Shake the eye drops container.
- Remove the cap. Do not touch the dropper tip. Eye drops must be kept clean.
- Tilt the head back slightly.
- Pull the lower eyelid down and away from the eyeball to form a pocket, as shown in the picture.
- Hold the dropper tip directly over the eye, but do not allow it to touch the eye or eyelid. If self-administering the drops, you may want to brace your hand against your face to keep it steady.
- Look up and place one drop in the pocket, continuing to hold the eyelid for a moment while the medication runs in. If you are self administering the drops, look directly at the dropper tip when positioning it in front of your eye. To keep from blinking, look away from the dropper tip just before you release a drop.
- Release the eyelid, close the eye for one or two minutes, and unless you recently had eye surgery, press a finger against the inner corner of the eye. This helps reduce the amount of the drug that gets absorbed into the body. This is important because some eye drops are potent enough to have effects throughout the body. Do not squeeze eye shut or rub it.
- Wait 5—10 minutes before applying any different type of eye medication.
- Replace the cap on the container.
- Wash your hands.



CONJUNCTIVITIS



“PINK EYE”

“Not all cases of pink eye need prescription medications. The symptoms can often be relieved with cool compresses and artificial tear solutions.”

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CONJUNCTIVITIS

Conjunctivitis is one of the most common and treatable eye infections in children and adults. Often called "pink eye," it is an inflammation of the conjunctiva, the tissue that lines the inside of the eyelid. This tissue helps keep the eyelid and eyeball moist.

While pinkeye can sometimes be alarming because it may make the eyes extremely red and can spread rapidly, it's a fairly common condition and usually causes no long-term eye or vision damage. Some kinds of pinkeye go away on their own, but others require treatment.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS:

- Redness of the eye and eyelids.
- Swelling and itching of the eye.
- A yellow or green colored discharge of the eye(s) which is worst in the morning.
- Crusting of the eyelids in the mornings.
- Greater amount of tears.
- Light sensitivity.



CAUSES

- Allergens (substances that cause allergies)
- Bacteria
- Irritating substances (shampoos, dirt, smoke, and especially pool chlorine)
- Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).
- Viruses
- **May also be triggered by *Improper care and cleaning of contact lenses.***

Allergic conjunctivitis affects both eyes and is a response to an allergy-causing substance such as pollen. In response to allergens, your body produces an antibody called immunoglobulin E (IgE). This antibody triggers special cells called mast cells in the mucous lining of your eyes and airways to release inflammatory substances, including histamines. Your body's release of histamine can produce a number of allergy symptoms, including red or pink eyes.

You may experience intense itching, tearing and inflammation of the eyes — as well as itching, sneezing and watery nasal discharge. Other symptoms may be swelling of the membrane (conjunctiva) that lines your eyelids and part of your eyeballs, resulting in what may look like clear blisters on the whites of your eyes.

Bacterial Conjunctivitis is an infection most often caused by staphylococcal or streptococcal bacteria from your own skin or respiratory system. Infection can also occur by transmittal from insects, physical contact with other people, poor hygiene (touching the eye with unclean hands), or by use of contaminated eye makeup and facial lotions.

Viral Conjunctivitis is most commonly caused by contagious viruses associated with the common cold. The primary means of contracting this is through exposure to coughing or sneezing by persons with upper

respiratory tract infections. It can also occur as the virus spreads along the body's own mucous membranes connecting lungs, throat, nose, tear ducts, and conjunctiva. **There are no available drops or ointments to eradicate the virus for this type of conjunctivitis.** Antibiotics will not cure a viral infection. Like a common cold, the virus just has to run its course, which may take up to two or three weeks in some cases. The symptoms can often be relieved with cool compresses and artificial tear solutions.

TREATMENT

- Apply warm moist compresses for 5 minutes, 3 - 4 times a day.
- Cleanse the lid margins and lashes of discharge.
- Cool compresses applied to the eyes often helps relieve the itching and discomfort.
- Lubricating eye drops (artificial tears) may help your eyes feel better.*
- Antihistamine pills may help relieve your symptoms.*
- If drops or ointment have been *prescribed*, use them until 24 hours after the symptoms subside.
- Cool compresses applied to the eyes often helps relieve the itching and discomfort.
- *Do not wear contacts for 48 hours after the symptoms subside.*

* You can buy lubricating eye drops and many antihistamine pills without a prescription.

RETURN TO SEE THE DOCTOR IF:

- ◆ Increased redness, pain, or swelling of the eye(s) develops.
- ◆ Fever rises to 101°F. (38.3 C.) or higher.
- ◆ Your vision becomes worse.
- ◆ Symptoms not improved after 48 hours.