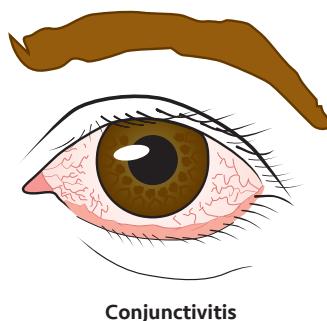




# Pink eye (conjunctivitis)

Pink eye is an inflammation of the conjunctiva. This is the covering of the inside of the eyelids and the whites of the eyes. The medical term for pink eye is conjunctivitis. It is called pink eye when the cause is a bacterial or viral infection. This is because the white part of the eye looks pinkish-red. Conjunctivitis can also be due to an allergic reaction.



Conjunctivitis Chart		
Signs & Symptoms	Cause	Treatment
Redness of the whites of the eyes. Watery, yellowish-green, or puslike discharge from the eye. Feels like you have something in your eye. May have crusting on the eyelashes, runny nose, and sore throat.	Viral infection (common). Bacterial infection (less common). Both are contagious.	For bacterial infection, prescribed antibiotic eye drops or ointment. Usually starts to clear up in 2 to 3 days. Take eye drops as long as prescribed. Viral infections are self-limiting and resolve without treatment. Antibiotic eye drops or ointment may be prescribed, because it is hard to tell a viral from bacterial infection, since symptoms for both are the same. Can take 14 to 21 days to clear up a viral infection.
Burning, itching, and watery eyes. May feel like you have something in the eye.	Allergic reaction (not contagious). Common irritants are cosmetics, contact lenses, dust, mold, pollen, and smoke.	Avoid the allergen. Use over-the-counter eye drops and/or artificial teardrops. Ask your doctor if it is okay to take an over-the-counter antihistamine.

## TRIAGE QUESTIONS



With pink eye, do you have any of these problems?

- A puslike discharge with redness and irritation
- Your vision is affected and/or your eye(s) hurt a lot.

NO  
▼

YES ➡ SEE DOCTOR



Have you tried self-care for a week and symptoms got worse or do you get conjunctivitis often?

NO  
▼

YES ➡ SEE DOCTOR



USE SELF-CARE



## SELF-CARE / PREVENTION

### Pink Eye

- Wash your hands often. Don't share towels, washcloths, etc.
- Avoid contact with other people as much as you can until you have used the prescribed antibiotic eye drops, etc. for 24 hours. Follow the rules of your workplace about pink eye. For children, follow the rules of their school.
- Use a tissue, not your finger, to touch the infected eye area.

- With your eyes closed, apply a cotton ball soaked in warm (not hot) water to the affected eye 3 to 4 times a day. Do this for at least 5 minutes at a time. Use a clean cotton ball each time.
- Throw away any makeup that could be contaminated. Don't wear eye makeup until the infection is all cleared up. Don't share makeup with others.
- Don't share eye drops with others.
- Don't put a cover or patch over the eye. This can make the infection grow.
- Don't wear contact lenses while your eyes are infected. Replace contact lenses or disinfect them twice before re-using.

### Allergic Conjunctivitis

- Avoid things you know you are allergic to.
- Use over-the-counter eye drops. These soothe irritation and help relieve itching.
- Apply a washcloth rinsed in cold water to the eyes. Do this several times a day.
- Use protective eyewear when you work with chemicals and fumes.