



Infectious Conjunctivitis-Pink Eye Exclusion Policy and Facts

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WHAT CAUSES CONJUNCTIVITIS AND HOW DOES IT SPREAD?

Conjunctivitis is an inflammation (irritation) of the eyes. It can result from a viral or bacterial infection or by an allergen and other irritants i.e. chemical, particles, etc. Viral and bacterial conjunctivitis is very contagious. It can spread from person to person by direct contact with the discharge or by coming into contact with infected objects i.e. pencils, table tops, door knobs, etc.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF CONJUNCTIVITIS?

Conjunctivitis can cause redness (bloodshot appearance), itching, excessive tearing, feeling of sand or dirt in the eye, yellow or green thick discharge, photophobia and/or pain. The eyelids may be swollen and slightly pink, and the eyelashes may be stuck together upon awakening in the morning. Children with conjunctivitis sometimes develop an ear infection and these children should have an immediate medical evaluation.

Viral Conjunctivitis may only affect one eye. Common symptoms are; excessive eye tearing, redness of conjunctiva, and a light discharge upon awakening. The eyelid is usually not swollen.

Bacterial Conjunctivitis affects one or both eyes and causes a heavy purulent discharge that is either yellow or green. The eye is often very red. The eyelid is usually swollen and there may be a fever. **Allergic Conjunctivitis** usually affects both eyes causing itching, redness and excessive tearing

TREATMENT

1. Careful cleaning of the outer eye to remove crust and discharge. Disposable pads or cotton balls (used once and thrown away) will help to avoid spread of infection.
2. Warm compresses will provide comfort.
3. Careful and frequent hand washing.
4. Avoid touching the eyes and face will help stop the spread of infection to others.
5. Bacterial conjunctivitis is treated with antibiotics. Treatment will include either an ointment or drops placed on the eye or eyelids.
6. Allergic conjunctivitis can be treated with cold compresses. The health care provider may recommend an antihistamine.

EXCLUSION POLICY

A student will be excluded from school when he/she experiences pain, impaired vision, fever, purulent discharge during the school day, or severe photophobia. To prevent further spread, students who have symptoms of bacterial conjunctivitis must remain out of school for twenty-four hours after treatment has begun or provide a note from a health care provider stating that the student is no longer contagious.