Conjunctivitis

Normal eye Eye with inflamed or irritated conjuctiva

For more information:



Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)



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Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)

What is it?

Conjunctivitis is a common eye condition worldwide. It causes inflammation (swelling) of the conjunctiva—the thin layer that lines the inside of the eyelid and covers the white part of the eye. Conjunctivitis is often called "pink eye" or "red eye" because it can cause the white of the eye to take on a pink or red color.

The most common causes of conjunctivitis are viruses, bacteria, and allergens. But there are other causes, including chemicals, fungi, certain diseases, and contact lens use (especially the extended-wear type). The conjunctiva can also become irritated by foreign bodies in the eye and by indoor and outdoor air pollution caused, for example, by chemical vapors, fumes, smoke, or dust.

Symptoms

- Pink or red color in the white of the eye(s) (often one eye for bacterial and often both eyes for viral or allergic conjunctivitis)
- Swelling of the conjunctiva (the thin layer that lines the white part of the eye and the inside of the eyelid) and/or eyelids
- Increased tearing
- Discharge of pus, especially yellowgreen (more common in bacterial conjunctivitis)
- Itching, irritation, and/or burning
- Feeling like a foreign body is in the eye(s) or an urge to rub the eye(s)
- Crusting of eyelids or lashes sometimes occurs, especially in the morning
- Symptoms of a cold, flu, or other respiratory infection may also be present
- Sensitivity to bright light sometimes occurs
- Symptoms of allergy, such as an itchy nose, sneezing, a scratchy throat, or asthma may be present in cases of allergic conjunctivitis

Prevention

- Wash your hands often with soap and warm water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.
- Avoid touching or rubbing your eyes.
- If you wear contact lenses remove them and wear back up glasses.

Avoid sharing hand and

face towels to keep from spreading the infection to others.

Treatment

• The treatment for conjunctivitis depends on the cause. Please see a healthcare provider as soon as possible.



