

## **PINKEYE (CONJUNCTIVITIS)**

Conjunctivitis is a common eye condition in children. 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.

### **CAUSE**

There are many causes including bacteria, viruses, allergies, eye injuries, or chemicals.

### **SYMPTOMS**

Redness, swelling, itching, pain and discharge from the eye. Symptoms vary depending on the cause. Bacterial conjunctivitis can sometimes be distinguished from other forms of conjunctivitis by a more purulent (pus) discharge. Viral conjunctivitis may last longer than conjunctivitis from other causes. For an exhaustive list see:

<http://www.cdc.gov/conjunctivitis/about/symptoms.html>

### **SPREAD**

Touching the secretions from the eyes, nose, or mouth of infected persons.

**INCUBATION** (time from exposure to onset of symptoms)

1 to 12 days, usually 1 to 3 days

### **CONTAGIOUS PERIOD**

While symptoms are present.

### **EXCLUSION**

Child care and School: Exclude cases of bacterial conjunctivitis that have both red eyes and discharge.

### **DIAGNOSIS**

Recommend parents/guardians call their healthcare provider if their child has redness of eyes and/or eyelids with pus and/or fever or eye pain.

### **TREATMENT**

Antibiotic treatment (eye ointment or drops) is occasionally prescribed. If the infection appears to be viral, no specific antiviral treatment is usually needed.

### **PREVENTION/CONTROL**

- Cover nose and mouth when sneezing or coughing. Use a tissue or your sleeve. Dispose of used tissues.
- Encourage children not to rub eyes. Keep the child’s eyes wiped free of discharge. Avoid contact with eye drainage.
- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and warm running water after contact with eye drainage.
- DO NOT share any articles, such as towels and washcloths, eye makeup, contact lens solution, or eye drops.
- Throw away used eye make-up after a pinkeye infection.

For more information please contact Contra Costa Public Health at 925-313-6740 and visit our website at <http://cchealth.org/pinkeye/>