

Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)

A common eye infection in young children. Bacterial conjunctivitis is of most concern in the child care setting. Viral conjunctivitis is often accompanied by the common cold or other cold-like illnesses.

Cause: Allergies, chemicals, viruses, bacteria or eye injuries

Symptoms: Bacterial—pink or red eyeball, pain or red eyelids, white or yellow eye discharge (pus), eyelids often matted after sleep.

Viral—pink eyeball with a clear, watery discharge and no fever, eye pain or eyelid redness.

Incubation: 1-3 days after exposure. It is spread by direct contact with secretions from eyes, nose and mouth. Children are contagious until the active infection passes.

Can child come to school: Bacterial with pus—child may not come to school until he/she has been examined by their health care provider and until 24 hours after antibiotic treatment begins.

Conjunctivitis without pus—no exclusion is necessary.

Prevention/Control: Keep child's eyes wiped free of discharge. Avoid contact with eye drainage. Dispose of tissues. Wash hands thoroughly with soap and warm running water after contact with drainage. DO NOT share towels or washcloths.

****Both conjunctivitis causes can look the same. Your child should be seen by your health care provider to determine if antibiotics are necessary.****