

# Conjunctivitis Caused by Infection



Infections are caused by viruses or bacteria. Treatment includes keeping your eyes and hands clean. Your healthcare provider may prescribe eye drops. They may also tell you to stay home from work or school if you're contagious. Untreated infections can be serious. It's important to see your provider for a diagnosis.

## Viral infections

A cold, flu, or other virus can spread to your eyes. This causes a watery discharge. Your eyes may burn or itch and get red. Your eyelids may also be puffy and sore.

## Treatment

Most viral infections go away on their own. Artificial tears and cool compresses can relieve symptoms. Your healthcare provider may also prescribe eye drops. A viral infection can be very contagious and spread quickly. To prevent this, wash your hands often. Use a separate tissue to wipe each eye. Don't touch your eyes or share bedding or towels. Use a new, clean washcloth every time. Throw away eye cosmetics, especially mascara. Never use someone else's eye cosmetics. If you use contact lenses, follow your healthcare provider's instructions on proper lens care.



## Bacterial infections

Bacterial infections often happen in one eye. There may be a watery or a thick discharge from the eye. These infections can cause serious damage to your eye if not treated promptly.

## Treatment

Your healthcare provider may prescribe eye drops or ointment to kill the bacteria. Use the medicine for the number of days it is prescribed. Don't stop using it when the symptoms improve. Other tips:

- Use cool compresses to help keep the eyelids clean and ease discomfort.
- Wash your hands often to keep the bacteria from spreading.
- Use a separate tissue to wipe each eye.
- Don't touch your eyes or share bedding or towels.

- Use a new, clean washcloth every time.
- Throw away eye cosmetics, especially mascara.
- Never use someone else's eye cosmetics.
- If you use contact lenses, follow your healthcare provider's instructions on proper lens care.

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