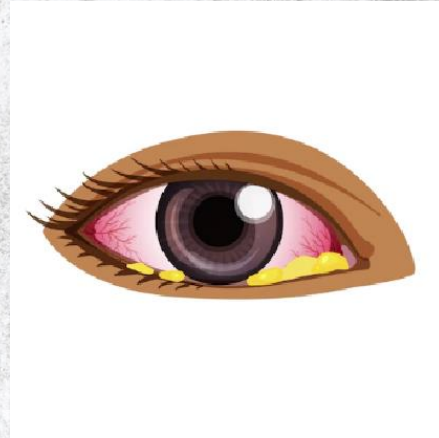
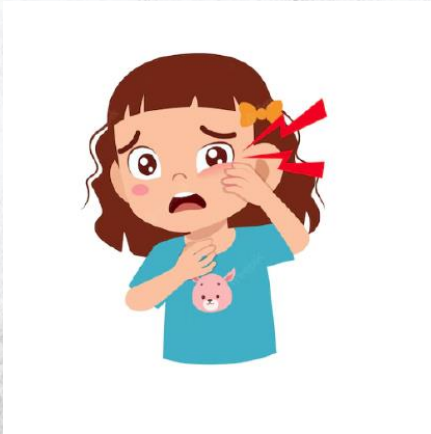


## Conjunctivitis



Conjunctivitis, also known as pinkeye, is an inflammation of the conjunctiva. The conjunctiva is the thin clear tissue that lies over the white part of the eye and lines the inside of the eyelid.

### What Causes conjunctivitis?

Several things could be to blame, including:

- Viruses, including the kind that causes the common cold
- Irritants such as shampoos, dirt, smoke, and pool chlorine
- A reaction to eye drops
- An allergic reaction to things like pollen, dust, or smoke. Or it could be due to a special type of allergy that affects some people who wear contact lenses.
- Fungi, amoebas, and parasites
- Bacteria

Conjunctivitis sometimes results from a sexually transmitted disease (STD). Gonorrhea can bring on a rare but dangerous form of bacterial conjunctivitis. It can lead to vision loss if you don't treat it. Chlamydia can cause conjunctivitis in adults. If you have chlamydia,





gonorrhea, or other bacteria in your body when you give birth, you can pass pinkeye to your baby through your birth canal.

Conjunctivitis caused by some bacteria and viruses can spread easily from person to person, but it isn't a serious health risk if diagnosed promptly. If it happens in a newborn, though, tell a doctor right away, as it might be an infection that threatens the baby's vision.

### What Are the Types of Pinkeye?

- **Viral** strains are the most common -- and may be the most contagious -- forms. They tend to start in one eye, where they cause lots of tears and a watery discharge. Within a few days, the other eye gets involved. You might feel a swollen lymph node in front of your ear or under your jawbone.
- **Bacterial strains** usually infect one eye but can show up in both. Your eye will put out a lot of pus and mucus.
- **Allergic types** produce tearing, itching, and redness in both eyes. You might also have an itchy, runny nose.
- **Ophthalmia neonatorum** is a severe form that affects newborns. It can be caused by dangerous bacteria. Get it treated right away to prevent permanent eye damage or blindness.
- **Giant papillary** conjunctivitis is linked with the long-term use of contacts or an artificial eye (ocular prosthesis). Doctors think it's an allergic reaction to a chronic foreign body in your eye.





## **What Are the Symptoms of conjunctivitis?**

They depend on the cause of the inflammation, but may include:

- Redness in the white of the eye or inner eyelid
- Swollen conjunctiva
- More tears than usual
- Thick yellow discharge that crusts over the eyelashes, especially after sleep. It can make your eyelids stick shut when you wake up.
- Green or white discharge from the eye
- Itchy eyes
- Burning eyes
- Blurred vision
- Photosensitivity of the eye
- Swollen lymph nodes (often from a viral infection)

## **Treatment**

You should consult your doctor for the suitable treatment which will depend on the cause of the conjunctivitis:

- If it's an allergic reaction: your doctor may suggest eyedrops or antihistamines to help with your symptoms.
- If it's a bacterial infection: your doctor may prescribe antibiotics for you. But these will not work if it's caused by a virus (viral conjunctivitis) or an allergy.
- Some sexually transmitted infections (STIs) can cause conjunctivitis. This type takes longer to get better.





## What can I do to relieve the symptoms?

A lot of it comes down to cleanliness.

- **Keep your eyes clean.** Wash any discharge from your eyes several times a day using a fresh cotton ball or paper towel. Afterward, discard the cotton ball or paper towel and wash your hands with soap and warm water.
- **Wash or change your pillowcase every day** until the infection goes away. When you do the laundry, clean your bed linens, pillowcases, and towels in hot water and detergent. Keep your own towels, washcloths, and pillows separate from others, or use paper towels.
- **Don't wear, and never share,** eye makeup, eye drops, or **contact lenses.** Wear glasses until your eye heals. And throw away disposable lenses, or be sure to clean extended-wear lenses and all eyewear cases.
- **Use a warm compress,** such as a washcloth soaked in warm water. Put it on your eye for a few minutes, three to four times a day. This eases the pain and helps break up some of the crust that may form on your eyelashes.
- **Limit eye drops.** Don't use them for more than a few days unless your eye doctor tells you to. It could make the redness worse.
- **Don't put a patch over your eye.** It may worsen the infection.
- **Protect your eyes** from dirt and other things that irritate them.
- **Nonprescription "artificial tears,"** a type of eye drops, may help ease itching and burning from the irritating things that cause your pinkeye. But you shouldn't use other types of eye drops because they may irritate the eyes, including those promoted to treat eye redness. Don't use the same bottle of drops in an uninfected eye.

