



# How to Prevent Pink Eye

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## KEY POINTS

- Viral and bacterial pink eye can spread easily from person to person.
- There is no vaccine that prevents all types of pink eye.
- Prevent getting or spreading pink eye by following some simple steps for good hygiene.



## If you have pink eye

If you have pink eye, you can help limit its spread to other people by following these steps.

### Wash hands often

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Wash your hands before and after cleaning, or applying eye drops or ointment to your infected eye.
- If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol to clean hands.

### Keep your eyes clean

- Avoid touching or rubbing your eyes with your fingers.
- With clean hands, wash any discharge from around your eyes several times a day using a clean, wet washcloth or fresh cotton ball.
  - Throw away cotton balls after use.
  - Wash used washcloths with hot water and detergent, then wash your hands again with soap and warm water.
- Do not use the same eye drop bottle for your infected and non-infected eyes.
- Clean eyeglasses, being careful not to contaminate shared items like hand towels.

### Use and clean contact lenses properly

- Stop wearing contact lenses until you no longer have symptoms, or your eye doctor says it's ok to start wearing them again.
- Clean, store, and replace your contact lenses as instructed by your eye doctor.
- Throw away disposable products that you used while your eyes were infected, including disposable contact lenses and cases.
- Clean reusable products as directed, including extended wear lenses, eyeglasses, and cases.

### Reduce the risk of spreading to others

- Wash pillowcases, sheets, washcloths, and towels often in hot water and detergent. Wash your hands after handling such items.
- Do not share personal items, like pillows, washcloths, towels, eye drops, eye or face makeup, makeup brushes, contact lenses, contact lens cases, or eyeglasses.
- Do not use swimming pools.

## If you are around someone with pink eye

If you are around someone with pink eye, protect yourself from pink eye by following these steps.

### Wash hands often

- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
- If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Wash your hands after contact with an infected person or items they use.
  - For example, wash your hands after applying eye drops or ointment to an infected person's eye, or after putting their bed linens in the washing machine.
- Do not touch your eyes with unwashed hands.

### Do NOT share items used by them

- Pillows, pillowcases, washcloths, towels
- Personal items like eye drops, eye or face makeup, makeup brushes
- Eyewear like contact lenses, contact lens storage cases, or eyeglasses

## Related diseases that vaccines prevent

There is no vaccine that prevents all types of pink eye. However, there are vaccines to protect against some viral and bacterial diseases that are connected to pink eye:

- [Rubella](#)
- [Measles](#)
- [Chickenpox](#)
- [Shingles](#)
- [Pneumococcal](#)
- [Haemophilus influenzae type b \(Hib\)](#)

## Resources



### Protect Yourself From Pink Eye Infographic

Print resource about how to protect yourself and others from getting pink eye.

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[Download \[JPG\]](#)

- [Pink Eye in Newborns](#)
- [When and How to Wash Your Hands](#)
- [Healthy Contact Lens Wear and Care: Protect Your Eyes](#)

### SOURCES

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