

Conjunctivitis (also known as red or pink eye)

Conjunctivitis is a common condition that causes redness and inflammation of the thin layer of tissue which covers the front of the eye (the conjunctiva).

Other symptoms of conjunctivitis include itchiness and watering of the eyes, and sometimes a sticky coating on the eyelashes (if it's caused by an allergy). If you have infective conjunctivitis, you may also have:

- burning sensation in your eyes
- a feeling of grit in your eyes conjunctivitis
- an enlarged lymph node (gland) in front of the ear
- a sticky coating on the eyelashes



Conjunctivitis that produces sticky pus is contagious



If eyes are red and feel gritty, the conjunctivitis is also usually contagious



Conjunctivitis caused by allergies like hay fever makes eyes red and watery but isn't contagious

Photos courtesy of NHS Choices

Managing your condition

Conjunctivitis can affect one eye at first, but usually affects both eyes after a few hours. You do not need to avoid work or school unless you or your child are feeling unwell.

How do I treat?

Treatment with medications isn't usually needed for conjunctivitis, because the symptoms often clear up within a couple of weeks.

There are several ways you can manage infective conjunctivitis at home. The advice below should help ease your symptoms.

- **Wash** your hands regularly – this is particularly important after touching your eyes and will stop the infection spreading to others.
- **Remove your contact lenses** – if you wear contact lenses, take them out until all the symptoms of the infection have gone; don't re-use old lenses after the infection has gone because they could be a potential source of re-infection; always use new lenses, solutions and cases after an infection.
- **Clean** - Gently clean away sticky discharge from your eyelids and lashes using cotton wool soaked in cooled previously boiled water.
- **Use lubricant eye drops** – these are available over the counter at pharmacies; they may help ease any soreness and stickiness in your eyes; always follow the manufacturer's instructions.

When should I seek advice?

It's very important to go back to your GP if you still have symptoms after two weeks. You should also contact your GP immediately if you experience any of the following symptoms:

- eye pain
- sensitivity to light (photophobia)
- loss of vision
- intense redness in one eye or both eyes



More information is available at the following websites

- NHS Choices - www.nhs.uk
- Stay Well Derbyshire – www.nhsstaywelderbyshire.co.uk
- Or visit your local pharmacy for advice