



Kapa'a Pediatrics, LLC

Conjunctivitis, Infectious (Pink Eye)

What is it? Infectious conjunctivitis is usually caused by bacteria or virus that infect the eye. Is it spread by direct contact from person to person or secretions from a contaminated object or surface.

What are the symptoms? See Allergic Conjunctivitis handout to compare symptoms

Infectious Conjunctivitis: Often comes a few days after some other symptoms, i.e., cough, runny nose, or fever. Often starts in one eye. **Thick discharge noticed throughout the day while awake NOT only when awakening in the morning or after naps.** Viral infections usually have less discharge, more tearing, and get worse over a few days before getting better in 1-2 weeks.

Treatment options:

Viral conjunctivitis: No treatment necessary as this process is self-limiting.

Bacterial conjunctivitis: If you think that your child has bacterial conjunctivitis, please call our office. We will take a detailed history to see if a bacterial source is most likely. We will also ask you to text us pictures of the eyes to get a baseline of the redness and discharge. We will prescribe antibiotic drops or ointment to the pharmacy of your choice. We will call and follow up to ensure resolution in 48 hours.

It is always okay to bring your child in for an appointment, but considering the following we have decided that this is not necessary. 1) Studies have shown that most conjunctivitis seen in pediatric offices with purulent discharge is due to a bacterial infection. 2) After a detailed history, the addition of a physical exam in the first 1-2 days of conjunctivitis is almost never more helpful in distinguishing viral from bacterial causes in children. 3) Cultures of eye discharge are almost never helpful in the diagnosis or treatment of conjunctivitis. 4) Topical antibiotics have less side effects, less bacterial resistance issues, and no systemic changes that are seen with oral antibiotics. 5) Decreases the spread to others that may be in the office. 6) Daycares and school often require treatment before children can return. 7) Saves families time and money. 7) There are a few prescription drops that are very inexpensive.

Returning to school? Conjunctivitis is very contagious. Wash hands often. Do not share towels, pillows, etc. Your child may return to school 24 hours after starting antibiotic eye drops.

When to call your doctor: No improvement after 48 hours of antibiotic eye drops. Eye pain, eyelid or around the eye swelling, fever, or blurry vision develops

*** Patient handouts created by Kapa'a Pediatrics are intended to give parents the most common and pertinent facts about a certain issue. If there is ever any concern that your child was given an incorrect diagnosis or is not following the usual expected course for an illness please call us to speak with a physician. (808) 634-8011**