

Pink Eye

What are the different types of pink eye/conjunctivitis?

- **Bacterial Conjunctivitis-** With bacterial conjunctivitis, the main symptom is eyelids being stuck together with pus. It can be present in 1 or both eyes. A few viruses can cause pus in the eyes (especially after sleeping), but most don't.
- **Viral Conjunctivitis-** With viral conjunctivitis. The main symptom is pinkness of the white parts of the eyes. The eyes are watery and most often, there is no pus. Viral conjunctivitis is usually on both sides.
- **Allergic Conjunctivitis-** During the spring and summer season, children with allergies can develop allergic conjunctivitis. The eyes are pink. Symptoms include itchy, scratchy eyes and tearing. There is no discharge. Allergic conjunctivitis occurs in both eye (except if caused by a bad contact lens). Treatment is oral antihistamines or antihistamine drops.
- **Blocked Tear Duct-** This condition is very common in infants. The main symptom is a constant watery eye. Tears can fill the eye and run down the face while the eye is not red and the eyelid is not swollen. The blocked tear duct results in the eye getting secondary infections. This will cause the eyelids to become matted with pus. Antibiotic drops are not used for this condition, except in the most extreme cases because it is not curative. Use warm washcloths to wash the eye lashes clean and perform lacrimal duct massages until the condition resolves.
- **Foreign Object in Eye (More emergent)-** Usually the result of small particles such as sand, dirt or sawdust being blown into the eyes. The grit often gets stuck under the upper eyelid and if not removed, an infection or scratched cornea can occur. The eye may start to produce pus. Older children often complain of feeling something in the eye. This condition should be seen immediately.
- **Eyelid Cellulitis (More emergent).** Eyelid cellulitis is a deep infection of the eyelid and tissues around it. Thankfully, it is fairly rare. The main symptom is a red, swollen, very tender eyelid and sometimes the eye can be swollen shut. The problem is caused by bacterial conjunctivitis and should be seen immediately. Cellulitis is bright red and warm to the touch. It also is tender and the child does not want to move his/her eye.

In contrast, one can see swelling of the eyelid due to a bug bite. This is an allergic response. The eye lid is pink and swollen, but non-tender and the child does not complain about movement of the eye.

How is pink eye treated and how long is it contagious?

- **Bacterial Conjunctivitis-** Highly contagious. Treated with antibiotic drops or ointment for usually 7 days. Children are considered contagious for 24 hours of treatment. After 24 hours, children can return to school or daycare.
- **Viral Conjunctivitis-** Highly contagious. There is no treatment for viral conjunctivitis. The body will heal itself with time. The eyes may stay pink for up to 1 week. Children may return to school or daycare if they are fever free and do not require treatment.

What else should a parent consider with a pink eye?

- Bacterial, viral and allergic pink eye is not an emergency! It can wait overnight to be seen.
- Many infants and younger children with pink eye also develop an ear infection at the same time.
- At Rockford Pediatrics, we do not call in eye drops or antibiotics without seeing the child first. We believe strongly in performing a full exam to ensure nothing is missed!