

Conjunctivitis (Pinkeye)

- Pinkeye is the irritation of the mucous membrane that lines the eyelid and eye surface. When irritation of or infection occurs, the lining becomes red and swollen (thus, pinkeye).
- Pinkeye is very common. It usually is not serious and will go away in 7 to 10 days without medical treatment. However, some types require treatment.

Symptoms

- ✓ Eye redness, swollen, red eyelids
- ✓ More tearing than usual
- ✓ Feeling as if something is in the eye
- ✓ Itching or burning feeling
- ✓ Mild sensitivity to light
- ✓ Drainage from eye
- ✓ Matting of eye lids

Causes

- ✓ Infections caused by viruses or bacteria
- ✓ Dry eyes from lack of tears or exposure to wind and sun
- ✓ Chemicals, fumes, or smoke
- ✓ Allergies

Contagiousness

- ✓ Viral and bacterial pinkeye are contagious and spread very easily. A child can get pinkeye by touching an infected person or something an infected person has touched, such as a tissue. Pinkeye can spread when kids swim in contaminated water or share contaminated towels. It also can be spread through coughing and sneezing.
- ✓ Doctors usually recommend keeping kids diagnosed with pinkeye out of school, day care, or summer camp until symptoms improve.
- ✓ Pinkeye cause by allergies or environmental factors is not contagious.

Treatment

- ✓ Pinkeye caused by a virus usually goes away on its own without any treatment in a few days. If the pinkeye is caused by a bacteria, the doctor will prescribe antibiotic eye drops or ointment.
- ✓ Anti-allergy medication may be prescribed if the doctor suspects the pinkeye is the result of allergies.
- ✓ Cool or warm compresses and acetaminophen or ibuprofen may make a child with pinkeye feel more comfortable. Eyes can be cleaned from draining and matting with warm water and cotton balls.

Prevention

- ✓ Wash hands often with warm water and soap
- ✓ Do not share eye drops, tissues, eye makeup, washcloths, towels, or pillowcases

When to Call Doctor

It's important to call the doctor if you suspect your child has pinkeye to determine what's causing it and how to treat it. If the pinkeye does not improve after 2 to 3 days of treatment, or after a week when left untreated, call your doctor.

Source: <http://kidshealth.org/parent/infections/eye/conjunctivitis.html>

Additional Resources: <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/pink-eye/DS00258>