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## **Conjunctivitis or Pink-Eye**

Conjunctivitis of the eye refers to increased redness of the eye. It is also called "pink-eye." Conjunctivitis may be caused by bacteria, viruses, and allergy.

Bacterial conjunctivitis is an eye infection caused by bacteria and frequently accompanies a cold. This eye infection presents as a yellow discharge (pus) in one or both eyes. The white portion of your child's eye is usually red or pink. The margins of your child's eyelids and eyelashes may be matted together with dried or sticky pus when awakening in the morning or after naps. It is normal for a small amount of mucus to be present in the inner corner of your child's eyes after waking up.

Viral conjunctivitis presents with red eyes without a discharge and may occur with a cold.

Allergic conjunctivitis is usually caused by pollen or animal allergy. Your child will complain of itchy eyes. You may notice excessive eye rubbing. Untreated, eye rubbing can lead to increased redness of the eyes and a secondary bacterial conjunctivitis.

Red eyes may also be caused by irritation from dirt, shampoo, smoke, and chlorine.

### **Cleaning My Child's Eye: Is It Necessary?**

Before putting any medicine in your child's eye, remove all the pus, using a soft wash cloth moistened with warm water. Gently wipe from the inside corner of the eye to the outside corner. Cleaning out the discharge will help the infection resolve quicker.

### **How Do I Treat My Child's Conjunctivitis?**

Bacterial conjunctivitis must be treated with an antibiotic eye medication. If only one eye is infected, use the medicine in both eyes for the first two days to prevent spread to the other eye. If your child is allergic to any medicines, please let our office know when we prescribe an antibiotic eye drop or ointment.

### **Antibiotic Eye Drops**

1. Place one drop in each eye as directed while your child is awake.
2. Apply by gently pulling down on the lower lid and placing one drop inside the lower eyelid.
3. If it is difficult to separate your child's eyelids, lay your child on his/her back.
4. Place a drop in the inside corner of the eye.
5. As your child opens the eye and blinks, the eye drops will flow in.
6. If the eyelashes appear wet after applying the drops, this usually indicates that enough medicine got into the eye.
7. Polytrim (Polymyxin B/Trimethoprim ) is an antibiotic eye drop commonly used (can be used in child with sulfa allergy).

### **Antibiotic Eye Ointment**

1. Place the ointment in each as directed while your child is awake.
2. Gently pull down the lower eyelid and apply a 1/4-inch ribbon of ointment inside the lower eyelid.
3. If it is difficult to separate your child's eyelids, place the ointment along the edges of the eyelids and very gently run your clean finger across the ribbon of ointment to flatten it.
4. Gently open and close the eyelids to spread the medicine around the inside of the eye.

### **How Long Do I Treat With The Antibiotic?**

Continue the drops or ointment until the discharge has stopped. Most eye infections will be better by 5-7 days. If the eye has not shown improvement or appears to be getting worse after 24-48 hours, please call our office.

### **Do You Have Any Tricks To Help Get The Medicine Into My Child's Eye?**

Putting eye drops or ointment in the eyes of a young child can be a real battle. You will have better luck with another person's help. One person can hold the child still while the other opens the eyelids with one hand and applies the medicine with the other. If you have to apply the medicine by yourself, try the following position:

1. Sit on the floor with your legs apart and position your child's head between your legs with the feet down by your feet.
2. Place your child's arms under each of your legs and gently hold your child between your knees.
3. This frees both of your hands to open the eyelids and put in the medicine.

### **How Do I Prevent An Eye Infection From Spreading?**

Bacterial conjunctivitis is contagious until treated. The infection may be spread when one child touches another child with their hand that was rubbing their eye before it is treated. Teaching your child the importance of washing hands will lessen the spread of conjunctivitis. Wash your hands after cleaning and applying medicine to your child's eyes. Avoid touching the eyedropper or medicine tube to your child's eye when applying the medicine.

Your child can return to school after using the eye drops or ointment for 24 hours.

### **How Do I Treat My Child's Eye Allergy?**

A sterile eye wash should be used first. Gently place the eye wash in your child's eye. It will help even if your child closes his/her eye. An eye wash will wash out the pollen or any foreign body (dirt, smoke, etc.) in the eye.

There are several very effective over the counter antihistamine drops that will help your child's eye allergies (**Zaditor**).

Patanol (twice a day) and Pataday (once a day) are prescription eye drops for treating eye allergy. They work by blocking the allergic reaction that causes the eye to itch. Patanol can be used until your child's eye allergy symptoms have resolved. If an eye discharge develops, your child may also need to be treated with an antibiotic drop or ointment.

Any drops placed in your child's eye may cause some burning, but the burning should resolve quickly. If the burning persists, call our office.

### **Call our office if:**

1. The eyelids become red or swollen.
2. Your child develops blurred vision or eye pain.
3. Your child acts or looks sick.
4. Your child's eyes become itchy or redder after you apply eye drops or ointment (possible allergic reaction).
5. The infection has not cleared up in five days with proper treatment.
6. Your child develops an earache (can occur along with conjunctivitis).
7. You have other questions or concerns.

## How to Put Eye Drops in Your Child's Eye

This Way



Not this Way!

