



Pink Eye

Conjunctivitis

What is pink eye?

Conjunctivitis is a very common eye condition that causes swelling of the thin layer (conjunctiva) that lines the inside of the eyelid and covers the white part of the eye. It is called “pink eye” because it causes the white of the eye to become pink or red. Pink eye is caused by bacteria, viruses, or allergens.

How is pink eye spread?

Pink eye is caused by a virus or bacteria can be easily spread from one person to another through direct contact. Sharing personal items (towels, washcloths, eye makeup) with someone infected with pink eye can cause it to spread. Also, touching a contaminated surface and then touching your own eye can spread pink eye. A person who had pink eye, and continued to use the same eye makeup/applicators, contact lenses, or other contaminated objects, can become re-infected. Pink eye caused by allergens is not contagious.

What are the symptoms of pink eye?

- Pink or red color of the white of the eye (can be in one or both eyes)
- Swelling of the conjunctiva (thin layer covering eye or eyelid)
- Teary/watery eye
- Thick yellow-green discharge (more common in bacterial pink eye)
- Itching, burning, irritation
- Feeling like something is in the eye; urge to rub the eye
- Crusting or matting of eyelids, especially when waking up in the morning

How is pink eye prevented?

Proper hand washing is the best way to prevent the spread of pink eye. Wash your hands often with warm water and soap. An alcohol-based hand sanitizer can also be used. Do not share personal items. Avoid touching/rubbing your eyes.

School Exclusion Policy:

Children with suspected pink eye (red, draining eyes) are excluded from school until a physician note is received or there are no more symptoms—TEA Code, Rule 97.7.

Resources:

Center for Disease Control & Prevention-

<http://www.cdc.gov/conjunctivitis/about/index.html>