

# Pink Eye (Conjunctivitis)

## Information for Parents and Caregivers

### What is Pink Eye?

Pink Eye, also known as Conjunctivitis, is an eye infection that can be caused by bacteria, virus, allergens, or other irritants.

### Symptoms of a Pink Eye

- Pink or red color in the white of the eye
- Swelling of the conjunctiva (thin layer over white of eye) and eyelid
- Increased tear production
- Itching, irritation, urge to rub the eyes
- Discharge from the eyes
- Crusting on eyelids and eyelashes

### Is Pink Eye Contagious? What is its Duration?

Pink Eye caused by bacteria and viruses are very contagious and can be spread by close personal contact, coughing, sneezing, touching of the eyes. Viral conjunctivitis clears up in 7 to 14 days, 2-5 days for bacterial conjunctivitis without treatment.

### Treatment & Symptom Management

It is not always necessary to seek medical treatment for Pink Eye. A cold compress and over-the-counter artificial tears can relieve inflammation and dryness. See a healthcare provider if there is pain in the eyes, sensitivity to light, symptoms don't improve in 24 hours, or you have a weakened immune system. Some bacterial Pink Eye infections require antibiotic treatment.

### Prevention

To prevent getting and spreading Pink Eye wash your hands often, avoid touching or rubbing your eyes, clean your eyeglasses, and do not share personal items (makeup, pillow cases, washcloths, towels, eye drops).

### When Can a Sick Child Return to Day Care, School, and other Social Settings?

A sick child should be excluded from social settings if they have white or yellow discharge from the eyes, until they have been evaluated by a physician.



ALABAMA REGIONAL CENTER FOR INFECTION PREVENTION  
AND CONTROL TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

The University of Alabama at Birmingham

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Pink Eye (Conjunctivitis), <https://www.cdc.gov/conjunctivitis/index.html>

Alabama Department of Health, Communicable Disease Chart for Alabama's Schools and Childcare Facilities,

<https://www.alabamapublichealth.gov/infectiousdiseases/assets/countyschoolsinfection2pg.11.17.15.pdf>

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