



CONJUNCTIVITIS (PINK EYE) SCHOOL FACT SHEET

EXCLUSION

- No exclusion recommended for viral, allergic or chemical conjunctivitis.
- Students with **diagnosed bacterial** conjunctivitis may return to school once antibiotics have been given for 24 hours.

CAUSE

- Different types of bacteria and viruses
- allergies, chemicals, or injuries (not contagious)

SYMPTOMS

- Redness, irritation, itchiness or pain of the eye
- Tearing of the eye; clear or yellow drainage from the eye. **Bacterial** conjunctivitis may be distinguished by pus.
- Change in vision
- Extreme sensitivity to light
- Heat and swelling of eyelids

SPREAD

- Direct contact with the secretions from the eyes, nose, or mouth of an infected person
- Touching contaminated items or surfaces (toys, doorknobs, etc.) and then touching the eye
- Bacterial and viral conjunctivitis can also be spread through a cough or a sneeze.

CONTAGIOUS PERIOD

- While infection is active (germs are alive)

PREVENTION OR CONTROL

- **HAND WASHING** after touching or wiping eyes, coughing or sneezing
- Do not share washcloths, towels, pillowcases, eye make-up.
- Cough and sneeze into your elbow or a tissue.
- Clean and disinfect toys and other mouthed objects, and classroom surfaces.

WHAT TO DO:

- Consult a doctor if there is yellow drainage/pus from the eye, fever, eye pain, eyelid redness or symptoms do not improve after two-three days.
- Avoid contact with eye drainage.
- Wash hands often, especially after touching eyes.
- If prescribed by a doctor, administer medication as ordered.

References: AAP (2006). *Red Book: 2006 Report of the Committee on Infectious Diseases.*
Hennepin County Community Health Department (2003). *Conjunctivitis.*
Maryland Department of Health & Mental Hygiene (2002). *Conjunctivitis.*