

FACT SHEET

Pink Eye

What is pink eye?

Pink eye (conjunctivitis) is an infection of the eye caused by a virus. Viruses are in the drainage from the eye. Pink eye is easily spread from one eye to the other or to other people by contact with this drainage.

What are the symptoms of pink eye?

The first signs of illness typically appear one to three days after exposure to the bacteria.

- Crusts that form on the eyelid overnight
- Gritty feeling in the eyes
- Redness in the eye
- Sensitivity to light
- Increased tearing

What is the treatment for pink eye?

Pink eye usually disappears on its own within 7-10 days. Some doctors may give a mild antibiotic eye drop or ointment. You can apply a clean cloth soaked in warm water to soothe discomfort. Children attending day care or school should be excluded until they receive medical care or the drainage has cleared.

How can pink eye be prevented?

- Wash your hands often.
- Avoid touching your eyes.
- Change your pillowcase and sheets often.
- Do not share towels, washcloths, handkerchiefs, eye drops or cosmetics.
- Handle and clean contact lens properly.

Hand Washing Instructions:

- Use soap and running water.
- Rub your hands vigorously for 20 seconds.
- Wash all surfaces, including:
 - Backs of hands
 - Wrists
 - Between fingers
 - Under fingernails
- Rinse well.
- Dry hands with a paper towel.
- Turn off the water using a paper towel instead of bare hands.

This fact sheet is for informational purposes only and is not intended for self-diagnosis or as a substitute for consultation with a health care provider. For more information contact your health care provider or visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at www.cdc.gov.