



Infective conjunctivitis

What is conjunctivitis?

Conjunctivitis is an infection in the membrane lining the eye and inside the eyelids, called the conjunctiva. The eye becomes red, sticky or watery, and can be itchy, sore and uncomfortable. The infection can affect one eye or both eyes.

What causes conjunctivitis?

Infection can be caused by a virus (such as the common cold virus, the flu virus and many others) or, less often, by bacteria. Conjunctivitis is not normally serious and in many cases gets better on its own. Some people notice that their child has a cold, sore throat or feels unwell at the same time.

Treatment

Most infections will clear up on their own. Viral infections do not respond to antibiotics and the infection may last two to three weeks before the natural immunity in your child's body is able to clear the virus – just like when we have the flu. You can clean any discharge/crusting away with a cotton pad and water. Antibiotic drops and/or lubricating drops may be prescribed for a short time. In a very small number of cases, in which there is a severe virus

infection, anti-inflammatory steroid drops may be needed.

Infection risk to others

Virus infections are very contagious (catching) and can be spread by contact with infected tissues, towels, pillowcases and even door handles. They can also be caught through droplets spread by sneezing and coughing. Not sharing towels/pillows and encouraging your child to wash their hands often is important to reduce the spread. Nurseries and schools may not allow children to attend whilst they have an infection.

Further check-ups

In most cases, your eye doctor will discharge your child straight from A&E.

What to look out for

- Very swollen eyelids
- Very blurry vision
- Painful eyes



If you are worried, please call the advice line below or alternatively you can take your child to A&E for a further examination.

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Moorfields Eye Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
City Road, London EC1V 2PD
Phone: 020 7253 3411
www.moorfields.nhs.uk

Moorfields Direct telephone helpline
Phone: 020 7566 2345
Monday-Friday, 8.30am-9pm
Saturday, 9am-5pm
Information and advice on eye conditions and treatments from experienced ophthalmic-trained nurses.

Patient advice and liaison service (PALS)
Phone: 020 7566 2324/ 020 7566 2325
Email: moorfields.pals@nhs.net
Moorfields' PALS team provides confidential advice and support to help you with any concerns you may have about the care we provide, guiding you through the different services available at Moorfields. The PALS team can also advise you on how to make a complaint.

Your right to treatment within 18 weeks
Under the NHS constitution, all patients have the right to begin consultant-led treatment within 18 weeks of being

referred by their GP. Moorfields is committed to fulfilling this right, but if you feel that we have failed to do so, please contact our patient advice and liaison service (PALS) who will be able to advise you further (see above). For more information about your rights under the NHS constitution, visit www.nhs.uk/choiceinthenhs