

Eye Infection - Viral

Definition

- A viral infection of the eye
- The main symptom is a pink or red eye

Health Information

Symptoms

- The eye looks irritated
- Red or pink color of the white of the eye
- May have increased tears (a watery eye)
- Eyelid may be puffy (mildly swollen)
- No pus or yellow discharge

Cause

- Viral conjunctivitis is the main cause of pink eyes without pus. Most often, it is part of a cold.
- **Pinkeye.** When the white of the eye becomes pink or red, it's called pinkeye. Conjunctivitis is the medical name for pinkeye. The conjunctiva is the membrane that covers the white part of the eye. It becomes pink when it is infected or irritated. Pinkeye can be caused by a virus or a bacteria.
- Bacterial pinkeye causes a lot of pus in the eye. It is treated with antibiotic eye drops.
- Viral pinkeye (no pus) is not helped by antibiotic eye drops.

Prevention of Spread to Others

- Good hand washing can prevent spread of infection.

Care Advice

1. Overview:

- Some viruses cause watery eyes (viral conjunctivitis).
- It may be the first symptom of a cold.
- It isn't serious. You can treat this at home.
- Colds can also cause some mucus in the corner of the eye.
- Here is some care advice that should help.

2. Eye Cleansing:

- Cleanse eyelids with warm water and a clean cotton ball.
- Do this 3 times a day while your child is awake and at home.
- This usually will keep a bacterial infection from occurring.

3. Artificial Tears:

- Artificial tears often make red eyes feel better. No prescription is needed.
- Use 1 drop per eye 3 times a day as needed. Use them after cleansing the eyelids.

4. **Artificial Tears - How to Give:**
 - For a cooperative child, gently pull down on the lower lid. Put 1 drop inside the lower lid. Then ask your child to close the eye for 2 minutes. Reason: So the medicine will get into the tissues.
 - For a child who won't open his eye, have him lie down. Put 1 drop over the inner corner of the eye. When your child opens the eye or blinks, the eye drop will flow in. If he doesn't open the eye, the drop will slowly seep into the eye.
5. **Antibiotic Eye Drops Not Needed:**
 - Antibiotic eye drops do not help viral eye infections.
 - They can only kill bacteria.
6. **Contact Lenses:**
 - Children who wear contact lenses need to switch to glasses until the infection is gone.
 - Reason: To prevent damage to the cornea.
 - Disinfect the contacts before wearing them again.
 - Discard them if they are disposable.
7. **What to Expect:**
 - Pinkeye with a cold usually lasts about 7 days.
 - Sometimes it turns into a bacterial eye infection. You can tell because the eyelids will become stuck together with pus.
8. **Return To School:**
 - Pinkeye with a watery discharge is harmless. There is a slight risk it could be passed to others.
 - Children with pink eyes from a cold do not need to miss any school.
 - Pinkeye is not a public health risk. Keeping these children home is over-reacting. If asked, tell the school your child is on eye drops (artificial tears).

Call Your Doctor If

- Your child gets pus in the eye
- Redness lasts more than 1 week
- You think your child needs to be seen
- Your child becomes worse

Pediatric Care Advice

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