

# Viral Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)

## What is viral conjunctivitis (pink eye)?

Viral conjunctivitis is an infection of the eye caused by a virus. It is considered to be very contagious. Some cases of pink eye can be caused by bacteria and/or allergies but these infections are not as common.

## What are the signs and symptoms of pink eye?

Symptoms of viral conjunctivitis (pink eye) can include a pink or red color to the whites of the eyes, a feeling of a foreign body in the eye, urge to rub the eye, itching, irritation or burning of the eye, and/or discharge from the eyes (pus or mucus). A person with pink eye may also experience crusting of the eyelids, especially in the morning, swollen eye lids, and increased tear production.

## How is viral conjunctivitis (pink eye) transmitted?

Conjunctivitis usually spreads from person-to-person through close personal contact, such as touching or shaking hands, sharing toys, or touching a contaminated object or surface, then touching your eyes before washing your hands. It can also be spread through the air by coughing and sneezing.

## How can we prevent pink eye?

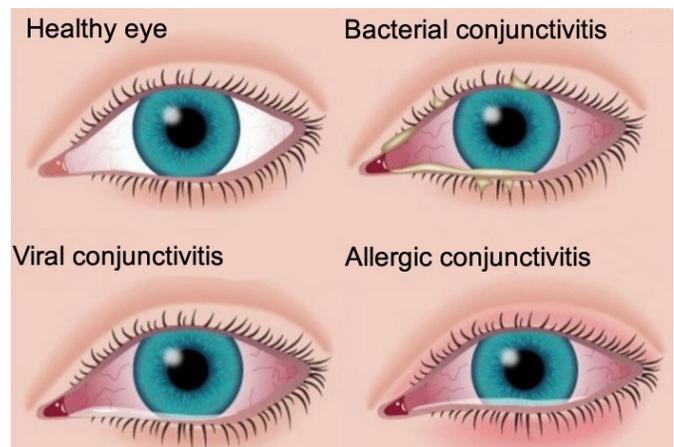
The best way to prevent viral conjunctivitis is by washing your hands frequently, especially before and after cleaning or applying eye drops or contact lenses. In general, you should avoid touching your eye with unwashed hands. Do not share pillows, washcloths, towels, eye drops, eyeglasses, makeup, contact lenses, or contact lens storage cases with an infected person.

## How are viral conjunctivitis infections treated?

Most cases of viral conjunctivitis clear up on their own after 7-14 days without treatment and without any long-term consequences. Your doctor may prescribe either antiviral or antibiotic eye drops as treatment for pink eye.

## How can you avoid reinfection?

Once your infection clears up, throw away and replace any eye or face makeup, contact lenses and cases, and contact lens solution. Pillow cases, sheets, washcloths and towels should be laundered, and eyeglasses or sunglasses should be thoroughly cleaned before reuse.



For more information, visit [www.CDC.gov/conjunctivitis](http://www.CDC.gov/conjunctivitis)



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