**Conjunctivitis**

Conjunctivitis is the term used to describe swelling (inflammation) of the conjunctiva — the thin membrane that covers the inside of your eyelids and the white part of your eye. Often this condition is called "pink eye”.

**There are several types of Conjunctivitis:**
- **Bacterial conjunctivitis**
  Known to be highly contagious, this type of conjunctivitis usually causes a red eye with pus discharge.
- **Viral conjunctivitis**
  This is the most common type of pink eye, caused by the same virus that causes the common cold. It is also very contagious.
- **Allergic conjunctivitis**
  This form of conjunctivitis is caused by the body's reaction to an allergen, such as pet dander or dust mites. It may also be caused by an irritant, such as swimming pool chlorine or smog. It is not contagious.

**What are the symptoms of Conjunctivitis?**
The signs and symptoms of conjunctivitis may vary depending on the cause, but the most common include:
- Redness or inflammation of the white of the eye or inside the eyelids
- Increased tears
- White, yellow or green discharge
- Crusting of the lids or lashes
- Itchy eyes
- Burning eyes
- Increased sensitivity to light
- Gritty feeling in the eye

**How is Conjunctivitis treated?**
The treatment for conjunctivitis will depend upon the cause. Often, conjunctivitis is mild and will resolve on its own within a few days. However, there are times when an antibiotic or other treatment is needed.

**When should you see a doctor or nurse practitioner?**
You should not hesitate to see your MD or NP if you experience:
- Pain in your eye(s)
- Blurred vision or increased sensitivity to light
- Intense redness in the eye(s)
- Symptoms that get worse or don’t improve
- Pre-existing eye conditions that may put you at risk for complications or severe infection
How do you stop Conjunctivitis from spreading?
Viral and bacterial conjunctivitis are very contagious and can spread easily. You can help limit the spread by:

- Washing your hands frequently during the day and before and after any care of your eyes.
- Avoiding touching or rubbing your eyes.
- Washing away discharge and crusting from lids and lashes with a moist tissue or cloth. Discard tissues after use.
- Changing pillowcases and sheets daily and wash them in hot water.
- Avoiding shared towels and wash cloths and washing them after each use in hot water with detergent.
- Discarding current eye and face make-up, contacts, contact solutions and cases.

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