

## *Pinkeye (Conjunctivitis)*

Conjunctivitis, also called Pinkeye, is an inflammation of the mucous membrane that lines the eye and inner surface of the eyelid. In newborns, conjunctivitis may be caused by an incompletely opened tear duct. Symptoms of pinkeye can include a bright pink color to the whites of the eyes, a gritty feeling in the eyes, itching and a watery or yellow discharge that often forms a crust during sleep.

If your child is experiencing these symptoms, call our office for an appointment for diagnosis and treatment. Antibiotic eye drops will be prescribed if they are indicated. It is especially important for young children with conjunctivitis to be examined, as a large number of them will also have an ear infection, requiring an oral antibiotic. Children tend to recover quickly from conjunctivitis and complications are rare. Conjunctivitis can be caused by a bacterial or viral infection or an allergic reaction. In newborns, conjunctivitis may be caused by an incompletely opened tear duct.

Bloodshot eyes can also be caused by a chemical burn or foreign object in the eye. If a chemical gets in your child's eye, flush the eye with water and contact the Poison Control Center immediately at 1-800-222-1222.

If there is redness and swelling around the eye, or upper or lower lid, this could indicate a more serious type of infection needing immediate treatment. Some forms of conjunctivitis are highly contagious. Therefore, if your child's eyes have a watery or yellow discharge, keep him/her away from other children until the pinkeye has been adequately treated. Encourage your child to keep his/her hands away from the eye area and wash those hands frequently--two big challenges with young children.

By changing your child's pillowcase each night during treatment, you can help prevent reinfection. Give your child his/her own towel to use to avoid spreading conjunctivitis to other family members.