

OA Reablement service	OA Day Care	OA Residential Care	Domiciliary Services	DMH Day Services	DMH Supported Living	DMH Residential Services	EIA'd
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CONJUNCTIVITIS

What is Conjunctivitis?

It is inflammation of the conjunctiva or the lining of the eyelid causing:

- Swollen eyelids - sometimes causing the eye to almost fully close;
- Pink/red eyes;
- Sore, itchy and sometimes painful eyes;
- A discharge causing the eye to be sticky and crusty;
- Sometimes the sticky discharge may cause the eyelids to stick together after sleeping.

What causes Conjunctivitis?

It can be caused by a number of things including infection, allergy or foreign bodies (e.g. piece of grit).

Who can it affect?

ANYONE can get conjunctivitis.

Infective Conjunctivitis

- Can occur in isolation or be part of another illness such as measles.
- Bacteria or viruses can cause infective conjunctivitis.
- Bacterial conjunctivitis will require antibiotic eye drops and/or ointment from the GP.
- Viral conjunctivitis is not helped by antibiotics and will clear up on its own, taking between 5-14 days.
- Sometimes it will not be clear whether the infection is bacterial or viral, so the GP may take eye swabs which will be sent to the laboratory for testing.
- If you are given treatment, follow closely the instructions – on completion of your treatment if your infection has not resolved it is advisable to make a further appointment with your GP / family doctor.

Allergic Conjunctivitis

- Allergic conditions such as hay fever can cause conjunctivitis.
- Allergies to eye make-up can cause conjunctivitis.

Foreign bodies

- Foreign bodies such as a piece of grit can cause conjunctivitis
- Conjunctivitis of only one eye may well indicate the presence of a

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“foreign body”.

How do you prevent spread?

The spread of **infective conjunctivitis** is common in families, so it is important to adopt good hygiene practices to prevent spread of the infection.

Frequent hand washing should be performed to prevent spread from hands that have accidentally touched infected eyes.

- Complete the course of any drops and/or ointment prescribed by the GP and only use on the person they are prescribed for.
- Have separate towels and flannels.
- Do not share eye make-up.
- Try not to touch or scratch the infected eye(s) and if you do, wash hands thoroughly.
- Some viral conjunctivitis is spread by the air-borne route and is more difficult to control.
- Always wash your hands before and after applying treatment and / or cleansing the eye(s)

Do you need to stay off work?

Yes; until discharge stops

Is there anything special about Conjunctivitis?

A particular type of bacterial conjunctivitis called **Ophthalmia Neonatorum** can affect new born babies. This infection is acquired from the mother during the birthing process and can be very serious. The particular type of conjunctivitis occurs in the first three weeks of life and requires urgent treatment with antibiotics.

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