

## What is conjunctivitis and pink eye?

Conjunctivitis is swelling (inflammation) or infection of the membrane lining the eyelids, called the conjunctiva. Conjunctivitis is also called, "Pink eye".

Conjunctivitis is caused most commonly by a **virus**, but may also be caused by bacteria or allergens.

Conjunctivitis can be very contagious.



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**Hours:**  
**September through May**

8:00am - 4:00pm, MTWF  
9:00am - 4:00pm, Thursday

### **Summer Hours**

9:00am - 3:00pm, M-F

# *Conjunctivitis and Pink eye*

**Signs and Symptoms**

**Treatment**

**Prevention**

UMD Health Services

Nurse care line: 218-726-7870

To make an appointment: 218-726-8155

[www.d.umn.edu/hlthserv](http://www.d.umn.edu/hlthserv)

## Signs and Symptoms

It is important to get an accurate diagnosis and prompt treatment if you think you have the signs and symptoms of conjunctivitis and pink eye.

Call the nurse care line or make an appointment if you experience:

- Crust that form on the eyelid overnight
- Redness in the eyes
- Itching in the eyes
- Clear, white or yellow discharge from the eye
- Eye pain\*
- Vision changes\*

\*Please note: eye pain and vision changes may be symptoms of conditions besides conjunctivitis. If you are experiencing these symptoms, you should be examined by a physician or ophthalmologist.

## Treatment

Most conjunctivitis is caused by a virus. **Viral conjunctivitis will go away on its own.** Antibiotics do not work against viral conjunctivitis.

Your medical provider will prescribe an antibiotic for **bacterial** conjunctivitis, in the form of an eye drop or ointment. Be sure to administer the full course of antibiotics to the eye. If you do not notice improvement within 72 hours, or if symptoms worsen, call the nurse care line for further instructions.

### Self-care tips for conjunctivitis:

1. Apply a cool compress to the eye.
2. With clean hands, use a clean washcloth dipped in warm water to wash discharge from the eye, moving from the inner corner of the eye to the outer corner of the eye. Wash hands again.
3. Discard eye make-up and wash anything that comes into contact with your eye (pillowcases).
4. Contact lens wearers: Leave lenses out for ten days. Use new lenses, new lens case and solution. Do not sleep with your contacts in.
5. Follow-up with UMD Health Services for eye pain, visual changes, worsening redness, or if symptoms do not resolve in 5 days.

## Prevention

Some forms of conjunctivitis can be spread from person-to-person. Therefore, to prevent conjunctivitis, remember to practice good hygiene habits:

- ✓ Wash hands frequently
- ✓ Wash pillowcases and sheets on a regular basis
- ✓ Keep hands away from the eyes
- ✓ Handle contact lenses with clean hands
- ✓ Do not share eye make-up, eye-glasses or contacts
- ✓ Do not share towels

Allergic conjunctivitis may be prevented by taking an allergy medication or avoiding allergens.