



Conjunctivitis

Conjunctivitis is an inflammation of the conjunctiva, the thin transparent skin that lines the inner eyelid and covers the white part of the eye. The 3 main types of conjunctivitis are: bacterial, viral and allergic.

Bacterial

Symptoms include redness of the eye, swelling of the eyelids and a gunky sticky mucous discharge (yellow in colour). Treatment involves using antibiotic eye drops and ocular lubricants for comfort.



Bacterial conjunctivitis

Viral

Symptoms include redness, irritation, pearly discharge, tearing and sometimes blurring. It is highly contagious by direct contact with your tears and you should avoid sharing towels & minimise contact with those around you until your symptoms settle down.



Viral conjunctivitis

Antibiotics do not work against viruses so treatment is aimed at managing your symptoms whilst the infection runs its course over a few weeks. Ocular lubricants and anti-inflammatory drops are commonly prescribed. Corneal inflammation is a complication of this condition so regular checks with your ophthalmologist are required to monitor you for this serious complication.

Allergic

Symptoms include redness of 1 or both eyes associated with itching, irritation, grittiness and sometimes discharge. Allergic conjunctivitis is caused by an allergic reaction to an irritant such as dust, pollen or other allergens. The condition often occurs in episodes and can be seasonal.



Allergic conjunctivitis

Treatment with ocular lubricants and in more severe cases anti-histamine drops can provide relief. Placing a cool compress over the eyes can also provide comfort.