

Conjunctivitis

From your NCH School Nurse

Conjunctivitis (pink eye) accounts for more than 3 million school days lost in U.S. Public Schools.

What is it?

Conjunctivitis is the medical term used to describe swelling and irritation of the conjunctiva – which is the thin membrane that covers the inside of the eyelids and the white part of the eye. Conjunctivitis can be viral, bacterial, or allergic. “Pink eye” is the most common form of conjunctivitis.

How do you get pink eye?

It can be very contagious. Children are susceptible because they are often in close contact with each other. Some of the most common ways to get the contagious form of pink eye are:

- Re-use of towels or handkerchiefs when wiping your face or eyes
- Not washing your hands
- Touching your eyes frequently
- Using old cosmetics and/or sharing them with others
- Improper cleaning of your contact lens

How do you prevent it?

Practice good hygiene. If a child has been diagnosed with infectious conjunctivitis, make sure you do the following to prevent the spread:

- Encourage children to wash their hands often
- Advise them to avoid touching their eyes
- Use separate towels, washcloths, handkerchiefs, and tissues to wipe their eyes or face. Change daily.
- Change their pillowcase frequently

Treatment:

If symptoms persist please follow up with your physician as soon as possible. Antibiotic ointment or eye drops may be prescribed. Students may return to school 24 hours after beginning treatment for infectious conjunctivitis. We want your student back in school and ready to learn.