

AN IMPORTANT NOTE FROM THE HEALTH OFFICE

CONJUNCTIVITIS (PINK EYE)

Conjunctivitis, commonly known as pinkeye, is redness and soreness (inflammation) of the membrane (conjunctiva) that covers the eye and lines the inner surface of the eyelid. **Viral conjunctivitis-** is often found along with the common cold or other mild cold-like illnesses. **Bacterial conjunctivitis** is uncommon in children older than 5 years of age.

CAUSE: Bacteria, viruses, allergies, eye injuries, or chemicals.

SYMPTOMS: May include redness, itching, pain, and eye discharge depending on the cause. Bacterial conjunctivitis can sometimes be distinguished from other forms of conjunctivitis by a more purulent (white or yellow) eye discharge (pus).

SPREAD: Bacterial and viral infections can be spread by contact with the secretions from the eyes, nose, and mouth, for example, if a person's fingers are contaminated with secretions and then they touch their eyes. Spread can also occur by sharing towels, washcloths, eye makeup (e.g., eyeliner, eye shadow, mascara), multi-dose eye drops or medications, or contact lens solution used by a person with conjunctivitis.

INCUBATION: It takes about 1 to 12 days depending on the organism, usually 1-3 days, after exposure for symptoms to begin.

CONTAGIOUS PERIOD: While symptoms are present.

EXCLUSION: **Bacterial and Viral Conjunctivitis**

- Student should be excluded from school who have **purulent conjunctivitis** (defined as pink or red conjunctivae with white or yellow eye discharge, often with matted eyelids after sleep and eye pain or redness of the eyelids or skin surrounding the eye), until evaluated and treated.
- **Non-purulent conjunctivitis** (defined as pink conjunctivae with a clear, watery eye discharge without fever, eye pain or eyelid redness) does not require exclusion from school.

DIAGNOSIS: Call your healthcare provider if your child has purulent (pus) eye drainage and/or fever, eye pain, or eyelid redness.

TREATMENT: **Bacterial conjunctivitis:** Antibiotic treatment (eye ointment or drops) may be prescribed.
Viral conjunctivitis: No specific antiviral treatment is usually needed unless a severe infection is present.

**PREVENTION/
CONTROL:**

1. Wash hands thoroughly with soap and warm running water after contact with eye drainage. **Thorough hand washing is the best way to prevent the spread of infectious diseases.**
2. Encourage children not to rub eyes. Avoid contact with eye drainage.
3. **DO NOT** share any articles, such as towels and washcloths, eye makeup (e.g., eyeliner, eye shadow, mascara), contact lens solution, or eye drops.
4. Discard makeup used within 3 days of onset of eye symptoms.
5. **DO NOT** touch eyes when using eye drops or eye medications.
6. Dispose of used tissues.

For more information, you may call the AAS Health Office at 231-4488, ext. 3911, or call your health care provider.