

Seeking advice

In most cases, you may not need to return for a further check-up following treatment.

However, if your sight becomes:

- More blurred over time, changes in your vision, like wavy lines or flashing.
- If the pain and redness are getting a lot worse.
- The light starts to hurt your eyes (photophobia).
- Intense redness in 1 eye or both eyes.

Who can I contact:

- General Practitioner (GP).
- NHS 111.
- Pharmacist at a Chemist.

Whiston Hospital
Warrington Road,
Prescot, Merseyside, L35 5DR
Telephone: 0151 426 1600

St Helens Hospital
Marshall's Cross Road,
St Helens, Merseyside, WA9 3DA
Telephone: 01744 26633

Southport Hospital
Town Lane, Kew,
Southport, Merseyside,
PR8 6PN
Telephone: 01704 547 471

Ormskirk Hospital
Dicconson Way, Wigan Road,
Ormskirk, Lancashire, L39 2AZ
Telephone: 01695 577 111



**Mersey and West Lancashire
Teaching Hospitals**
NHS Trust

Infective Conjunctivitis

Patient information leaflet

If you need this leaflet in a different language or accessible format please speak to a member of staff who can arrange it for you.

اگر به این بروشور به زبان دیگر یا در قالب دسترس پذیر نیاز دارید، لطفاً با یکی از کارکنان صحبت کنید تا آن را برای شما تهیه کند.

Jeśli niniejsza ulotka ma być dostępna w innym języku lub formie, proszę skontaktować się z członkiem personelu, który ją dla Państwa przygotuje.

Dacă aveți nevoie de această broșură într-o altă limbă sau într-un format accesibil, vă rog să discutați cu un membru al personalului să se ocupe de acest lucru pentru dumneavoastră.

如果您需要本传单的其他语言版本或无障碍格式，请联系工作人员为您安排。

إذا احتجت إلى هذه النشرة بلغة أخرى، أو بتنسيق يسهل الوصول إليه، يرجى التحدث إلى أحد الموظفين لترتيب ذلك لك.

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What is Conjunctivitis?

Conjunctivitis means inflammation of the conjunctiva. The conjunctiva is the thin 'skin' that covers the white part of the eyes and the inside of the eyelids.

What causes conjunctivitis?

- Bacterial or viral infection is the most common cause.
- Allergy is another common cause. For example, many people with hay fever (allergic to pollen) have red and inflamed conjunctiva.
- Irritant conjunctivitis sometimes occurs. For example, your conjunctiva may become inflamed after getting some shampoo in your eyes.
- The chlorine in swimming baths is a common cause of mild irritant conjunctivitis.
- It can also occur alone.

What are the symptoms of common infective conjunctivitis?

- One eye may be infected, but it usually spreads to both eyes.
- The 'whites' of the eyes look inflamed, and red or pink.
- The eyes may feel gritty and water more than usual.
- Some mild soreness may develop, but it is not usually very painful.
- The eyelids may become swollen, and are often stuck together with gluey material ('discharge') after a sleep.

Conjunctivitis can get better on its own, without medical treatment, after one to two weeks. Bathing and cleaning the eyelids with sterile pads/cotton wool and cool boiled water, is normally all that is needed. However it can be treated with eye ointment.

After cleaning wait five minutes before applying the eye ointment and then:

- Wash your hands.
- Take the lid off the ointment and tip the head back.
- Gently pull down your lower eyelid and look up.
- Hold the tube above the eye and gently squeeze a 1cm line of ointment along the inside of the lower eyelid, taking care not to touch the eye or eyelashes with the tip of the tube.
- Blink your eyes to spread the ointment over the surface of the eyeball.
- Vision may be blurred on opening the eyes – try not to rub the eyes. The blurring will clear after a few moments if the child keeps blinking.
- Wipe away any excess ointment with a clean tissue.
- Repeat this procedure for the other eye if advised to do so by your doctor or pharmacist.
- Replace the lid of the tube.
- Take care not to touch the tip of the tube with your fingers.
- If you are using more than one type of ointment, wait for about half-an-hour before using the next ointment to allow the first to be absorbed into the eye.

Risks and benefits of treatment:

If you do not treat the infection fully it may return. Always complete the full instructions for the eye drops or ointment as instructed by your doctor. If you are worried that the condition is not improving, please seek advice from the practitioner who prescribed the treatment.

The Do's and Do not's while you have conjunctivitis:

Do not:

- Share flannels, towels or pillows with anyone else.
- Share your eye drops with anyone else.
- Attend school/work whilst you have red, watery or sticky eyes. If you work with children, elderly people or patients, or if you handle food in your job.
- Wear your contact lenses until your eyes are better and after 24 hours after the last dose of ointment/drops (if they were required).
- **Do not** rub your eyes.
- **Do not** wear eye make up.

Do:

- Wash hands regularly with warm soapy water.
- Wash pillows and face cloths in hot water and detergent.
- Use disposable paper tissues to wipe your eyes. **Use one tissue per eye** to prevent cross-infection and throw them straight into the bin after use.