

Eye Pink - Symptom

Definition

- Red or pink color of the white of the eye

Health Information

Symptoms

- The eye looks irritated
- Red or pink color of the white of the eye
- May have increased tears (a watery eye)
- Eyelid may be puffy (mildly swollen)
- No pus or yellow discharge
- Not caused by an eye injury

Causes

- **Pinkeye.** When the white of the eye becomes pink or red, it's called pinkeye. Conjunctivitis is the medical name for pinkeye. The conjunctiva is the membrane that covers the white of the eye. It becomes pink when it is infected or irritated. Pinkeye (conjunctivitis) has many causes.
- **Viral conjunctivitis** is the main cause of pink eyes without pus. Most often, it is part of a cold.
- **Bacterial conjunctivitis.** Pinkeye plus the eyelids are stuck together with pus. Most likely, this is a secondary infection of a viral conjunctivitis.
- **Allergic conjunctivitis** from pollens. Most children with eye allergies also have nasal allergies (hay fever). Symptoms include sneezing and clear nasal discharge.
- **Irritant conjunctivitis** from sunscreen, soap, chlorine in pool water, smoke, or smog. Irritants can also be transferred by touching the eye with dirty fingers. Irritants can be food or plant resins.
- **Contact lens conjunctivitis.** Caused by poor use of disinfecting solution or keeping lenses in overnight.
- **Foreign body (FB).** If only one side has pinkeye, a FB in the eye must be considered.
- **Serious Cause.** A bacterial infection of the eyelids and skin around them. Causes the lids to be very red and swollen.

Care Advice

1. Overview:

- Most unexplained pinkness or redness is from a viral infection.
- It may be the first symptom of a cold.
- Changes may occur over the next 24 hours. What happens will tell you if the cause is different.
- Here is some care advice that should help.

2. Eye Cleansing:

- Cleanse eyelids with warm water and a clean cotton ball.
- Try to do this 3 times a day while your child is awake and at home.
- This usually will keep a bacterial infection from occurring.

3. **Artificial Tears:**

- Artificial tears often make red eyes feel better. No prescription is needed.
- Use 1 drop per eye 3 times a day as needed. Use them after cleansing the eyelids.
- Antibiotic and vasoconstrictor eyedrops do not help viral eye infections.

4. **Eye Drops: How to Give**

- For a cooperative child, gently pull down on the lower lid. Put 1 drop inside the lower lid. Then ask your child to close the eye for 2 minutes. Reason: So the medicine will get into the tissues.
- For a child who won't open his eye, have him lie down. Put 1 drop over the inner corner of the eye. If your child opens the eye or blinks, the eye drop will flow in. If he doesn't open the eye, the drop will slowly seep into the eye.

5. **Contact Lenses:**

- Children who wear contact lenses need to switch to glasses for a while.
- Reason: To prevent damage to the cornea.

6. **What to Expect:**

- Pinkeye with a cold usually lasts about 7 days.
- Sometimes, it turns into a bacterial eye infection. You can tell because the eyelids will become stuck together with pus.
- Pinkeye from an irritant usually goes away within 2 hours after it's removed.

7. **Return To School:**

- Pinkeye with watery discharge is harmless. There is a slight risk it could be passed to others.
- Children with pink eyes from a cold do not need to miss any school.
- Pinkeye is not a public health risk. Keeping these children home is over-reacting. If asked, tell the school your child is on eye drops (artificial tears).

Call Your Doctor If

- Your child gets pus in the eye
- New symptoms occur
- Redness lasts more than 1 week
- You think your child needs to be seen
- Your child becomes worse

Pediatric Care Advice

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