

# CONJUNCTIVITIS

## What is conjunctivitis?

Conjunctivitis is a common condition that causes redness and inflammation of the thin layer of tissue that covers the front of the eye (the conjunctiva).

Other symptoms of conjunctivitis include itchiness and watering of the eyes, and sometimes a sticky coating on the eyelashes (if it's caused by an allergy). If you have infective conjunctivitis, you may also have:



- burning sensation in your eyes
- a feeling of grit in your eyes
- an enlarged lymph node (gland) in front of the ear
- a sticky coating on the eyelashes

Conjunctivitis can affect one eye at first, but usually affects both eyes after a few hours.

## Treatment for conjunctivitis

Treatment isn't usually needed for conjunctivitis, because the symptoms often clear up within a couple of weeks.

There are several ways you can treat infective conjunctivitis at home. The advice below should help ease your symptoms.

- Remove your contact lenses – if you wear contact lenses, take them out until all the symptoms of the infection have gone; don't re-use old lenses after the infection has gone because they could be a potential source of re-infection; always use new lenses, solutions and cases after an infection.
- Use lubricant eye drops – these are available over the counter at pharmacies; they may help ease any soreness and stickiness in your eyes; always follow the manufacturer's instructions.
- Gently clean away sticky discharge from your eyelids and lashes using cotton wool soaked in water.
- Wash your hands regularly – this is particularly important after touching your eyes and will stop the infection spreading to others.

It's very important to go back to your GP if you still have symptoms after two weeks. You should also contact your GP immediately if you experience any of the following symptoms:

- eye pain
- sensitivity to light (photophobia)
- loss of vision
- intense redness in one eye or both eyes