



Pink Eye

Conjunctivitis (pink eye) is redness and soreness of the eye. Pink eye is usually caused by viruses, bacteria, or allergens.

If you think your child has pink eye:

- Tell your childcare provider or call the school.
- Your child does **not** need to stay home from childcare or school unless your child has a fever or is not healthy enough to participate in routine activities.
- Antibiotics or a note from a health care provider are **not** required to return to childcare or school.
- For more information, call Hennepin County Epidemiology at 612-543-5230 or your local health department.

Parent/Guardian information

Symptoms

Your child may have redness, itching, pain, and drainage from the eyes. One or both eyes may be affected. Your child may have a fever.

If your child is infected, it usually takes 1 to 3 days for symptoms to start.

Spread

- By touching secretions from the eyes, nose, or mouth.
- By touching hands, objects, or surfaces contaminated with secretions.

Contagious period

While symptoms are present.

Call your health care provider

If your child has thick drainage from the eye and/or your child is a newborn. Your doctor will decide if treatment is needed. If the infection is caused by a virus, no specific antiviral treatment is usually needed. Antibiotic treatment may be prescribed if a bacterial infection is diagnosed.

Most children with pink eye get better after 5 or 6 days without antibiotics.

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Prevention

- Cover nose and mouth when sneezing and coughing by using a tissue or your sleeve. Dispose of used tissues in the trash right away.
- Wash hands often, but especially after touching anything that could be contaminated with secretions from the eyes, nose, or mouth. Your child may need help with handwashing.
- Using a product that kills germs, clean and disinfect objects that come in contact with secretions from the eyes, nose, or mouth.
- Do not share anything that touches the eyes, such as towels, washcloths, eye makeup, contact lens solution, or eye drops.
- Discourage rubbing and touching the eyes. Keep your child's eyes wiped free of drainage.
- Use a cotton-tipped swab to apply medication.

Hennepin County Public Health
Epidemiology
612-543-5230
epi-envhlth@hennepin.us

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