



# Conjunctivitis

## Patient Information Leaflet

# **What is Conjunctivitis?**

Conjunctivitis is an inflammation of the conjunctiva, the clear membrane covering the whites of the eyes and the insides of the eyelids. It can be caused by infection with bacteria or viruses or can be caused by an allergic reaction such as in hay fever.

## **Signs and Symptoms of Conjunctivitis**

The signs and symptoms of conjunctivitis include sore, red eyes with a gritty feeling. The eyes may have a sticky discharge.

## **What is the Treatment?**

Bacterial conjunctivitis is treated with antibiotic drops and/or ointment. It may be necessary to take swabs to identify the exact type of organism responsible and to determine the best antibiotic to treat it.

Viral conjunctivitis cannot be cured by antibiotics and may take several weeks to resolve. The doctor may prescribe antibiotic drops however to prevent a bacterial infection from occurring or lubricating drops to soothe the eye.

Allergic conjunctivitis may be treated with antihistamine or steroid drops.

# Hygiene

- Both bacterial and viral conjunctivitis are highly contagious and can easily spread to the unaffected eye and to other people, therefore hand washing is extremely important.
- You should wash your hands thoroughly and dry them after touching your face or putting in eye drops.
- Do not share a face flannel, towel or make-up with other people.
- Dispose of any paper tissues after using them to wipe your eye.
- Avoid the use of eyeliner and mascara during infection and discard same following infection

We hope that this information is helpful to you. If anything is unclear, or you have any other questions you would like to ask, then please do ask the nurse/doctor.

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Revision History

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