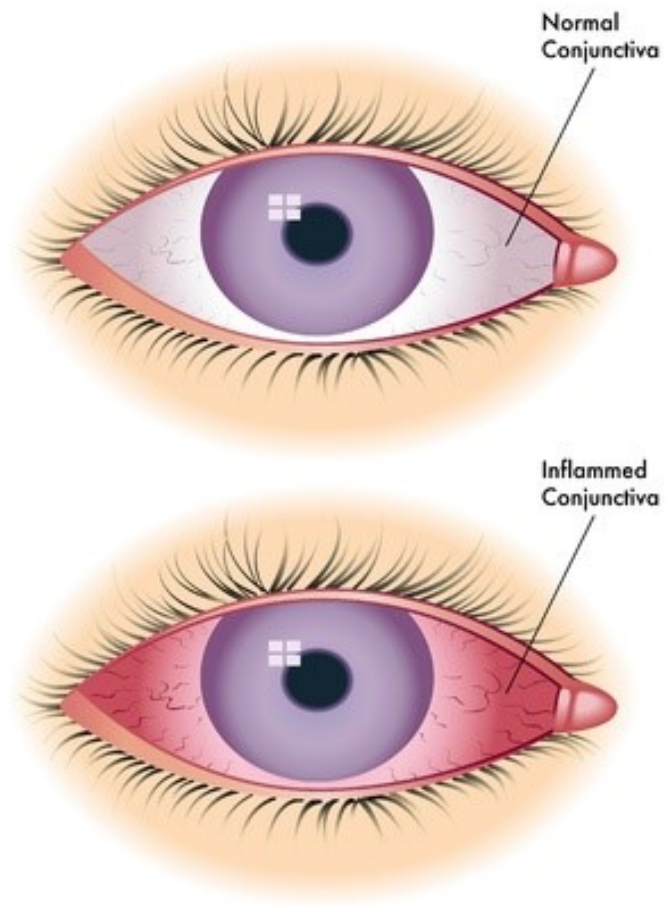


CONJUNCTIVITIS



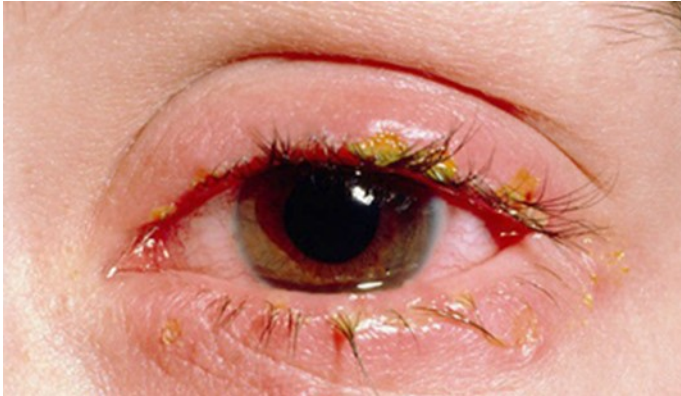
Conjunctivitis

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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).

People often refer to conjunctivitis as red eye.



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). Read more about the symptoms of conjunctivitis.

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

WHAT CAUSES CONJUNCTIVITIS?

The conjunctiva can become inflamed as a result of:

- a bacterial or viral infection – this is known as **infective conjunctivitis**.
- an allergic reaction to a substance such as pollen or dust mites – this is known as **allergic conjunctivitis**.
- the eye coming into contact with things that can irritate the conjunctiva, such as shampoo or chlorinated water, or a loose eyelash rubbing against the eye – this is known as **irritant conjunctivitis**.

TREATING CONJUNCTIVITIS

Treatment isn't usually needed for conjunctivitis, because the symptoms often clear up within a couple of weeks. If treatment is needed, the type of treatment will depend on the cause. In severe cases, antibiotic eye drops can be used to clear the infection.

Irritant conjunctivitis will clear up as soon as whatever is causing it is removed.

Allergic conjunctivitis can usually be treated with anti-allergy medications such as antihistamines. If possible, you should avoid the substance that triggered the allergy.

It's best not to wear contact lenses until the symptoms have cleared up. Any sticky or crusty coating on the eyelids or lashes can be cleansed with cotton wool and water.

Washing your hands regularly and not sharing pillows or towels will help prevent it spreading.

See your GP immediately if you have:

- eye pain.
- sensitivity to light (photophobia).
- disturbed vision.
- intense redness in one eye or both eyes.
- a newborn baby with conjunctivitis.