

# Conjunctivitis

This is an infection of the conjunctiva (the skin which covers the white of the eye and lines the eyelids). There are several causes, but the three most common are an allergy, bacteria or virus. Usually conjunctivitis occurs in one eye, but both eyes can be affected within a short space of time.

## Signs and symptoms

Sore, gritty, red eyes and a discharge that may be watery or with pus (purulent), depending on the cause. This makes the eye sticky.

## Treatment

The doctor may need to take swabs to determine the cause of the conjunctivitis. It will take a few weeks before the result of your swabs is known.

Bacterial conjunctivitis is easily treated with antibiotic drops or ointment and resolves within a couple of hours.

There is no treatment for viral conjunctivitis. It will gradually clear up on its own, but may take several weeks in some cases. The doctor may prescribe antibiotic drops or ointment to prevent a secondary bacterial infection occurring.

Allergic conjunctivitis may be treated with steroid or antihistamine eye drops.

Bacterial and Viral Conjunctivitis is infectious, so it is important that you follow this advice:



- keep your face flannel and towel separately from those of the rest of the family
- wash your hands thoroughly before and after touching your eyes
- should you need to wipe your eye, use tissues and dispose of them immediately afterwards. Remember to use a clean tissue for each eye, to prevent cross-infection
- under no circumstances allow anyone else to use your eye drops or ointment. Throw them away when your treatment is finished.

If your eye needs bathing, clean it gently using boiled, cooled water and clean cotton wool.

If you have any queries or problems with your eye after you get home, please contact the nurses in the Ophthalmology Outpatients Department at Doncaster Royal Infirmary by telephoning 01302 366666, ext 3672 / 3681, or at Bassetlaw Hospital on 01909 500990, ext 2385.

## **Patient Advice & Liaison Service (PALS)**

PALS staff are available to offer advice or information on healthcare matters. The office is in the Main Foyer (Gate 4) of Doncaster Royal Infirmary. Contact can be made either in person, by telephone or email. PALS staff can also visit inpatients on all Trust sites.

**The contact details are:**

**Telephone: 01302 553140 or 0800 028 8059**

**Minicom (Text talk): 01302 553140**

**Email: [pals.dbh@dbh.nhs.uk](mailto:pals.dbh@dbh.nhs.uk)**

