

# Treatment for conjunctivitis

The conjunctiva is a thin transparent membrane that covers the white part of the eye and the inner surfaces of the eyelids. If it becomes inflamed it is called conjunctivitis. The inflammation can be due to an infection, irritant or allergic reaction.

## What are the symptoms of infective conjunctivitis?

- Reddening of the eye(s)
- Watering eyes
- Soreness
- Sticky eyes

## What causes infective conjunctivitis?

There are 3 causes;

- Bacteria
- Viruses
- Sexually transmitted diseases

It is difficult for the GP to tell the difference between a bacterial and viral infection.

Both types of infections will normally get better without any need for treatment.

Conjunctivitis caused by a sexually transmitted disease will usually last for several months. You will need to have an eye swab.

## Do I need antibiotics?

Infective conjunctivitis does not usually need medical treatment. The infection should clear up within 1-2 weeks.

## What treatment should I take?

There are a number of things that you can do to treat your condition;

- Remove contact lenses until all the symptoms have cleared
- Clean away the stickiness from your eye lashes with cotton wool and water.
- Wash your hands regularly to limit spread of infection
- Lubricant eye drops may help to ease the soreness in your eyes.

## When should I come back and see the doctor?

You will need to contact your GP immediately if you experience any of the following symptoms;

- Moderate to severe eye pain
- Photophobia (sensitivity to light)
- Loss of vision
- Intense redness in your eyes

**We thank the doctors at Bishops Castle Medical Practice who created the original version of this leaflet**