



MID-JERSEY PEDIATRICS

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CONJUNCTIVITIS

I. Red eye(s) without pus (Pink eye, bloodshot eyes, conjunctivitis).

Findings: Include redness of the sclera (white part of the eye), redness of the inner eyelid, watery discharge and no yellowish discharge. It is usually caused by a viral infection or an allergy and may be accompanied by congestion. Viral conjunctivitis usually lasts as long as the cold (4 to 7 days). Allergic conjunctivitis may be related to pollens, molds or other environmental factors and may last longer.

Home Care: For viral infections it is important to rinse the eye with warm water frequently. Use a fresh cotton ball or clean gauze each time. This is to prevent a bacterial infection. In the case of allergic conjunctivitis, your doctor may prescribe an eye drop or an antihistamine. Avoid cigarette smoke. Call the office if a yellowish discharge appears. Please call right away if the eyelids become red and swollen or if there is severe pain.

II. Eye Infection with pus (Bacterial Conjunctivitis)

Findings: Yellowish discharge from the eye, eyelids stuck together, especially after naps. These are usually caused by various bacteria and are often associated with a cold. Children may infect themselves by rubbing their noses and then their eyes. With treatment, the discharge should clear up in a few days; the red eye may persist slightly longer.

Treatment: Before putting in any medicine, remove all pus from the eye with warm water and cotton balls. To administer eye drops, gently pull down on the lower lid and drop in the prescribed amount. Alternatively, put the eye drops in the inner corner of the eye while the child is lying down with their eye closed. The drops will flow in when your child opens their eyes.

For ointment, separate the eyelids and put a thin ribbon from one corner to the other. Again, if it is difficult to separate, put the ointment on the lid margins and it will flow in as it melts.

Contagiousness: Both viral and bacterial conjunctivitis are highly contagious. The pus can cause eye infections in other people if they get it in their eyes. Therefore, it is very important that the sick child not share towels, washcloths, or pillows with other family members. Both you and your child need to wash your hands often (especially after putting in the medicine) to prevent spreading this infection. When administering eye drops, be careful not to touch the dropper to the infected eye surfaces, as this will contaminated the medicine when the dropper is placed back into the bottle.