



Conjunctivitis (bacterial)

Patient information leaflet



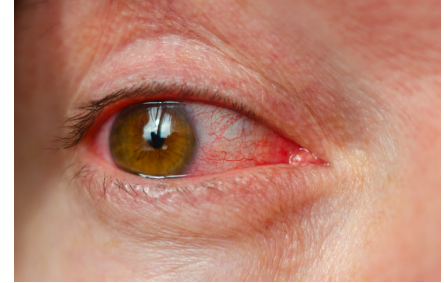
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Common Ailments Service

Only use this leaflet if your pharmacist has advised you about your or your child's condition.

Conjunctivitis (red eye or pink eye) is a common condition in which part of the eye becomes inflamed. Causes of conjunctivitis include allergies and infection with bacteria (bacterial conjunctivitis).



Bacterial conjunctivitis can make your eyes:

- red or pink
- burn
- feel gritty
- produce a sticky liquid (discharge)
- water

Bacterial conjunctivitis does not normally affect vision. Discharge at the front of the eye may blur your vision but this usually clears with blinking. The infection usually starts in one eye and can spread to the other. Itching is not normally a symptom of bacterial conjunctivitis and may mean that the conjunctivitis has a different cause.



Treatment and Prevention

Mild bacterial conjunctivitis usually goes away without treatment within 7 days.

Treating your conjunctivitis at home

You can ease your symptoms by:

- wiping your eyes with cotton wool (1 piece for each eye) soaked in water that has been boiled and left to cool
- putting a clean wet flannel on your eyes for a few minutes to cool them down

To stop bacterial conjunctivitis spreading:

- wash your hands after touching your eyes
- avoid rubbing your eyes
- do not share towels and pillows
- wash your pillow cases and face cloths in hot water and detergent

You do not need to stay away from work or school if you have bacterial conjunctivitis.

Medicines that can help

These medicines are not suitable for everyone. Make sure you have asked your pharmacist for advice about what treatment is best for you or your child.

If you have bacterial conjunctivitis, you may need treatment with **chloramphenicol** antibiotic eye drops. Chloramphenicol should stop the bacteria growing.



Treatment and Prevention

Your eye should start to feel better within a few days, but keep using the eye drops for at least 48 hours after your eye has got better. This will help to make sure that all of the bacteria are gone.

Your pharmacist may recommend that you wait 3 days before deciding whether you need treatment with chloramphenicol. This is to see if your eye gets better by itself. Go back to see your pharmacist if your eye does not feel better within 3 days.

Always read the patient information leaflet that comes with your medicine.

If you are concerned about any side effects from a treatment, report it to a doctor, nurse or pharmacist. You can also report side effects on the Yellow Card [app](#) or [website](#).



When to Get Help

Contact your local accredited optometrist if you have:

- trouble or pain when moving your eyes (contact the optometrist now)
- flashing lights or wavy lines in your vision (contact the optometrist now)
- used chloramphenicol for a few days but the conjunctivitis is not getting better
- conjunctivitis that keeps coming back

A list of local accredited optometrists is available here: <http://www.eyecare.wales.nhs.uk>

Everyone is entitled to a free eye health examination if you have any eye problem.

Go to your local emergency eye department, A&E, or call 111 urgently if you have:

- severe pain in your eyes
- loss of vision
- sudden changes to your sight, for example double vision
- swelling or redness around your eye
- a red eye with headache, pain or sensitivity to light

If you are worried that your or your child's condition is not getting better, or is getting worse, talk to your GP.



More information

For more information on conjunctivitis or a medicine, talk to your pharmacist or look at the following websites:

NHS 111 Wales: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/conjunctivitis/>

Medicines A-Z: <https://www.nhs.uk/medicines/>

Information from the above resources is included in this leaflet.

Free eye health examinations are available if you are having problems with your eyes.

More information is available here: <https://www.nhs.wales/service-area/eye-care-wales/>



Mae'r daflen hon hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg. This leaflet is also available in Welsh.

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Welsh Medicines Advice Service