Pink Eye
(Conjunctivitis, Bacterial)

Conjunctivitis is an irritation (*inflammation*) of the clear membrane that covers the white part of the eye (*conjunctiva*). The irritation can also happen on the underside of the eyelids. Conjunctivitis makes the eye red or pink in color. For this reason, conjunctivitis is commonly known as pink eye.

CAUSES
- Infection from a germ (*bacteria*) on the surface of the eye.
- Infection from the irritation or injury of nearby tissues, such as the eyelids or cornea.
- More serious inflammation or infection on the inside of the eye.
- Other eye diseases.
- The use of certain eye medications.

SYMPTOMS
The normally white color of the eye or the underside of the eyelid becomes pink or red in color. The pink eye is usually associated with irritation, tearing and some sensitivity to light. Bacterial conjunctivitis is often associated with a thick, yellow discharge from the eye. If discharge is present, there may also be some blurred vision in the affected eye.

DIAGNOSIS
Conjunctivitis is diagnosed by an eye exam. The eye specialist looks for changes in the surface tissues of the eye, which may determine the specific type of conjunctivitis. A sample of the discharge may be collected on a cotton tipped swab. The sample will be sent to a lab to see whether the inflammation is caused by a bacterial or viral infection.

TREATMENT
Bacterial conjunctivitis is treated with medicines that kill germs (*antibiotics*). Drops are most often used. However, antibiotic ointments are available and may be preferred by some individuals. Antibiotics taken by mouth (*oral*) are sometimes used. Artificial tears or eyewash may ease discomfort.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS
- To ease discomfort, apply a cool, clean washcloth to the eye for 10 to 20 minutes, 3 to 4 times a day.
- Gently wipe away any drainage from the eye with a warm, wet washcloth or cotton ball.
- Wash hands often with soap. If possible, use paper towels to dry the hands.
- **Do not** share towels or washcloths. This may spread the infection.
- Change or wash your pillowcase every day.
- You should not use eye makeup until the infection is gone.
- **Do not** operate machinery or drive if vision is blurred.
- Stop using contact lenses until directed by your caregiver. Replace the contact lenses that were worn at the start of the infection.
- **Do not** touch the edge of the eyelid with the eye drop bottle or ointment tube when applying medications to the affected eye. This may stop the infection from spreading to the other eye or to others.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:
- The infection has not improved after 3 days of treatment.
- There is a yellow discharge from the eye.
- Eye pain increases.
- The redness is spreading.

- Vision becomes blurred.
- You or your child has an oral temperature above 102° F (38.9° C), not controlled by medicine.
- Your baby is older than 3 months with a rectal temperature of 102º F (38.9º C) or higher.
- **Your baby is 3 months old or younger with a rectal temperature of 100.4º F (38º C) or higher.**
- Facial pain, redness or swelling develops.
- You or your child develops a problem that may be related to the prescribed medicine.

MAKE SURE YOU:

- Understand these instructions.
- Will watch your condition.
- Will get help right away if you are not doing well or get worse.

Document Released: 09/27/2006 Document Re-Released: 01/09/2011
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