Pink Eye
(Conjunctivitis, Viral)

Conjunctivitis is an irritation (*inflammation*) of the clear membrane that covers the white part of the eye (the *conjunctiva*). The irritation can also happen on the underside of the eyelids. Conjunctivitis makes the eye red or pink in color. This is what is commonly known as pink eye. Viral conjunctivitis can spread easily (*contagious*).

CAUSES
- Infection from a virus 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 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 is usually pink or red in color. The pink eye is usually associated with irritation, tearing and some sensitivity to light. Viral conjunctivitis is often associated with a clear, watery discharge. If a 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 take on changes characteristic of the specific types of conjunctivitis. A sample of any discharge may be collected on a Q-Tip (*sterile swap*). The sample will be sent to a lab to see whether or not the inflammation is caused by bacterial or viral infection.

TREATMENT
Viral conjunctivitis will not respond to medicines that kill germs (*antibiotics*). Treatment is aimed at stopping a bacterial infection on top of the viral infection. The goal of treatment is to relieve symptoms (such as itching) with antihistamine drops or other eye medications.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS
- To ease discomfort, apply a cool, clean wash cloth to your 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 a cotton ball.
- Wash your hands often with soap. Use paper towels to dry.
- **Do not** share towels or washcloths. This may spread the infection.
- Change or wash your pillowcase every day.
- You should not use eye make-up until the infection is gone.
- Stop using contacts lenses. Ask your eye professional how to sterilize or replace them before using again. This depends on the type of contact lenses used.
- **Do not** touch the edge of the eyelid with the eye drop bottle or ointment tube when applying medications to the affected eye. This will stop you from spreading the infection to the other eye or to others.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:
- The infection has not improved within 3 days of beginning treatment.
- A watery discharge from the eye develops.
- Pain in the eye increases.
- The redness is spreading.

- Vision becomes blurred.
- An oral temperature above 102° F (38.9° C) develops, or as your caregiver suggests.
- Facial pain, redness or swelling develops.
- Any problems that may be related to the prescribed medicine develop.

MAKE SURE YOU:

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

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