

Conjunctivitis means inflammation of the conjunctiva.

This usually means a red eye.

There are a lot of causes of a red eye and conjunctivitis is one of them.

There may be many types of conjunctivitis –

Allergic conjunctivitis – caused by allergies and can cause a red eye off and on for months to years

Bacterial conjunctivitis – caused by bacteria and can cause a sore red eye with discharge and swelling. This may require antibiotic drops.

Viral Conjunctivitis - caused by viruses and results in a sore red eye with watery discharge and swelling. This is not helped by antibiotic drops. It can spread very quickly to other members of the family or anyone who is in contact with the patient.

You must go to your eye doctor and a slit-lamp examination.

This will help diagnosing the subtype of conjunctivitis and treat it appropriately as treatment of each of these subtypes is radically different.

General precautions in helping the spread of infectious conjunctivitis (bacteria or viral)

1. Wash hands frequently specially before putting in eye drops
2. Keep hand towel separate and do not let other members of the family use it
3. Do not touch the unaffected eye
4. Use tissues and then throw them away in the bin (disposable tissues)
5. Change pillowcases frequently and don't let other members of the family use your pillow

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