

---

## Conjunctivitis (Bacterial)

---

**Description:** Inflammation of the white of the eye, with swelling of the lids and mucopurulent (pus) discharge.

**Symptoms:** Symptoms include the above symptoms, often accompanied by pain.

**How it is Spread:** Bacterial conjunctivitis can be spread by direct contact with secretions from the eye(s). This type of infection may also be spread indirectly through towels, washcloths, handkerchiefs and other objects that have been contaminated with secretions from the eye(s).

**Incubation Period:** Usually 24-72 hours.

**How Long Can a Person Pass the Infection to Others?** Persons with bacterial infection are contagious as long as the eye is draining.

### **Responsibilities of Parents and Caregivers:**

- The child should be seen by a physician for proper diagnosis and treatment if the symptoms include redness of the eye lid, purulent (pus) eye drainage, fever or pain.
- Parents should notify caregivers about their child's infection.

### **Control of Spread:**

- The child with red eyelids, purulent (pus) eye discharge, pain or fever may return to child care after being evaluated by a physician and treated with antibiotics for 24 hours.
- The bacterial disease is easily spread by contact with discharge from the eye.
- Good personal hygiene (careful hand washing, using soap and warm water) must be followed by providers and the children.
- Proper cleaning of soiled articles including laundering with hot, soapy water and sanitizing objects and surfaces.

**Treatment:** Topical antibiotics are required for the management of bacterial infections.

**Comments:** The child with watery eye discharge without redness of the eyelid, eye pain or fever does not require exclusion. Careful hand washing and precautions for drainage and secretions is required for this type of eye discharge. Eye inflammation may also be caused by chemical or allergies which cannot be spread to other people.