

Oxford Eye Hospital

Treatment for conjunctivitis

Information for patients



What is conjunctivitis?

Conjunctivitis is an infection of the conjunctiva (the 'skin' which covers the white of the eye and lines the eyelids). It is a common infection and in most cases it will clear up on its own in 7-10 days.

There are several causes of conjunctivitis, but in most cases it is caused by common bacteria, and by viruses which also cause the common cold.

What are the signs and symptoms?

Sore, gritty, red eyes, and discharge which may be watery or sticky (depending on the cause), making the eyes sticky in the mornings.

What is the treatment?

If the doctor diagnoses bacterial conjunctivitis a nurse may need to take swabs to confirm the diagnosis. In the meantime you will be started on antibiotic drops or ointment.

The results may take several weeks to come through. We will contact you if the results show that you need a different prescription.

- Bacterial conjunctivitis is easily treated with antibiotic drops or ointment.
- There is no treatment for viral conjunctivitis. It will gradually clear up on its own, but the doctor may prescribe antibiotic drops or ointment to prevent you from getting a secondary bacterial infection.

Conjunctivitis is infectious, so it is important that you follow these rules:

1. Keep your face flannel and face towels separate from those of the rest of the family.
2. Wash your hands thoroughly after touching your eyes.
3. Use tissues if you need to wipe your eyes, and dispose of them immediately afterwards.
4. Under no circumstances allow anyone else to use your eye drops or ointment. Throw them away when your treatment is finished. **Never keep used bottles.**

Follow-up

You do not need a follow-up appointment. However, if the antibiotics do not resolve the problem within 3-5 days, please contact the Outpatient department.

How to contact us

If you have any questions concerning your eye condition or treatment, please do not hesitate to contact:

Eye Hospital Outpatients on **01865 231099**

If you need an interpreter or need a document in another language, large print, Braille or audio version, please call **01865 221473**.

When we receive your call we may transfer you to an interpreter. This can take some time, so please be patient.

Rebecca Turner, Matron, Oxford Eye Hospital

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