

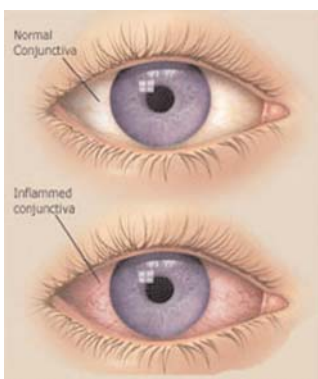
## MEDICAL



**Dr. Mark D. Fromer is a board-certified ophthalmologist since 1988**

## What is "pink eye"?

**What infections cause pink eye, what are infectious pink eye symptoms, and how are they treated?**



### Viral pink eye Bacterial pink eye

#### What is "pink eye"?

Pink eye, or conjunctivitis, is an infection of the inner eyelids and surrounding tissues of the eye. Some of these tissues overlay the white part of the eye, so when they become inflamed, the eye appears red. Technically, the term conjunctivitis simply means an inflammation of these tissues.

These tissues react to a wide range of bacteria, viruses, allergy-provoking agents, irritants, and toxic agents, as well as to underlying diseases within the body. Viral and bacterial forms of conjunctivitis are common in childhood, but they can occur in people of any age. Overall however, there are many causes of pink eye. These can be classified as either infectious or noninfectious.

#### Common symptoms of pink eyes are:

- Eye redness
- Swollen, red eyelids
- More tearing than usual
- Feeling as if something is in the eye
- An itching or burning feeling
- Mild sensitivity to light
- Crusting of the eye

#### What causes pink eye?

Pink eye may be caused by viruses or bacteria, but the leading cause of a red, inflamed eye is virus infection. The occurrence of viral pink eye depends upon the season. During the cold and flu season, most pink eye is caused by viruses. And just other viral infections, they do not respond to antibiotics. Viral pink eye is highly contagious. In other words, the vast majority of pink eye will get better without antibiotic drops.

While viral pink eye may not require an antibiotic, those affected should see a doctor. A number of different viruses can be responsible for the infection. Viral pink eye symptoms are usually associated with more of a watery discharge that is not green or yellow in color. Often, viral "cold-like" symptoms, such as sinus congestion and runny nose, are also present. The eyelids may be swollen. Sometimes looking at bright lights is painful.

Those caused by bacteria do respond to antibiotics by decreasing the length of time of having the pink eye by a couple of days; however, most people with bacterial pink eye are able to successfully fight off the infection without medication. Occasionally this form of pink eye can be associated with infection of the cornea (the clear portion of the front of the eyeball). This infection must be correctly detected and treated.

#### How do you get pink eye?

There are many myths and misconceptions concerning pink eye. While it is true that conjunctivitis is contagious, it is not because the bacteria or viruses that cause it are worse than in other contagious illnesses.

The viruses that cause pink eye are the same ones that cause the common runny nose, cough, post-nasal drip and, occasionally diarrhea. What causes pink eye in one person may only cause nasal congestion in another. The contagiousness lies in how it is transmitted. Like most cold season viruses, the infection gets transmitted hand-to-mouth through secretions. Those with pink eye tend to rub their eyes often. Then when they contact another by handshaking, the virus gets transmitted. Simply being in the room with someone with pink eye is of no danger. And if the person with pink eye carefully avoids rubbing his eyes and washes his hands throughout the day, the risk of transmission is quite low.

The bacteria that cause pink eye are the same ones that cause ear infections. It is not uncommon for the doctor to find an ear infection along with the pink eye. In this scenario, it is almost certain that the eye and ear infection are caused by the same bacteria. These bacteria are easily found in the environment, and the infection is usually started simply because the unlucky person happened to rub his eyes when he had these bacteria on his hands.

#### Why all the fuss about pink eye?

The problem is that determining whether the pink eye is caused by a bacteria or virus is virtually impossible by just examining the eye. Therefore, many physicians simply opt to give antibiotics to cover the possibility of bacterial illness. People with infectious pink eye should not attend school or go to work until symptoms improve.

Pink eye may be more serious if you have a condition that decreases your body's ability to fight infection, have vision in only one eye, and wear contact lenses.

For more information, please visit  
www.fromereye.com  
Manhattan - 212-832-9228  
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## Medicinal Herbs

#### Astragalus

**Scientific name:** *Astragalus membranaceus*

#### Medicinal value

This herb strengthens metabolism and digestion, raises metabolism, aids in strengthening the immune system and is used in the healing of wounds and injuries.

#### Apocynum (Black Indian Hemp)

**Scientific name:** *Apocynum cannabinum*

#### Medicinal value

It is used to treat congestive heart failure as it contains cardio-active glycosides. This herb doesn't have an edge over digitalis and hence is not advisable to be used by any human.

#### Arnica

**Scientific names:** *Arnica spp.*

#### Medicinal value

If used externally this herb reduces inflammation and pain of bruises, aches, and sprains. While usage it must be kept in mind that internal application of this herb has a toxic effect on the heart and causes very high blood pressure.

#### Betony

**Scientific names:** *Stachys officinalis*

#### Medicinal value

It is an astringent used to treat diarrhea and ease gum, mouth and throat irritation. A blend or tea of these leaves can be either drunk or used as a gargle or mouthwash. It is also an effective treatment for mucous membrane irritation and diarrhea but overdosing may cause excessive irritation of the stomach.

#### Broom

**Scientific name:** *Cytisus scoparius*

#### Meidical value

It has abundantly used as an alternative to marijuana, which has negative effects. It has an action of a diuretic but is not advisable to use it as a diuretic also.

#### Bilberries

**Scientific name:** *Vaccinium myrtillus*

#### Medicinal value

It is a food supplement and increases the visual acuity apart from preventing glaucoma, cataracts, and macular degeneration.

#### Birch Leaves

**Scientific names:** *Betula verrucosa* Erh. or *B. pubescens* Erh.

#### Medicinal value

This herb is taken with a lot of water along. They act as a mild diuretic and are used for the treatment of kidney and urinary tract infections.

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