



## [Bob Costas's Eye Trouble Temporary, Experts Say](#)

**Steven Reinberg HealthDay Reporter**, Wednesday, February 12, 2014

While skiers, snowboarders and skaters held viewers' attention during this week's Winter Olympics, it was difficult not noticing the TV broadcaster Bob Costas's glaring eye infection as well.

The persistent infection, known as conjunctivitis, that forced Costas to break away from his post on Tuesday is caused by the same virus as the common cold, experts say.

"It's usually an adenovirus, the same virus that infects you when you get a sore throat or a runny nose," explained **Dr. Mark Fromer**, an ophthalmologist at Lenox Hill Hospital in New York City.

The result is an inflammation of the clear covering of the white part of the eye and the lining of the underside of the eyelid.

Usually, patients' eyes itch, swell and tear. It's also likely that Costas may be experiencing light sensitivity and blurred vision, other common symptoms of conjunctivitis.

Last Thursday, opening night of NBC's Olympics coverage, Costas's very red left eye was unmistakable. The infection quickly became a hot topic.

Instead of subsiding, though, the infection grew worse. By Monday night it was evident that Costas now had "pinkeye" as it is commonly called. For Tuesday night's programming, Matt Lauer subbed for Costas, who has hosted the Games since 1988.

Conjunctivitis is highly contagious and easily spread from one eye to the other by rubbing your eyes, **Dr. Fromer** said. It also passes from one person to another through touch.

Although probably uncomfortable, Costas is unlikely to be in any medical danger.

Just like the common cold, viral conjunctivitis has no cure. But it usually goes away without treatment in five days to a week, **Dr. Fromer** said.

"It's very rare for it to take much longer than a week. It's annoying, but you get better without causing any permanent damage," he added.

In the meantime, there is no reason to limit activities, such as reading or watching TV, that rely on sight.

To reduce the itching and swelling, "artificial lubricating drops are given," Said **Dr. Fromer**. "Occasionally a mild

steroid is given to take the edge off and make the patient more comfortable. An antibiotic is also given to treat the possible bacteria underlying the conjunctivitis."

Bacterial conjunctivitis can be more problematic than viral conjunctivitis.

"Conjunctivitis can also be caused by bacteria, which is more serious with a lot more redness, a lot more discharge and mucus production."

**Dr. Fromer** said bacterial conjunctivitis can also lead to scarring of the cornea and reduced vision.

If you develop conjunctivitis, hand washing is the best way to prevent spreading the infection to others. And you shouldn't wear contact lenses until the condition passes.

In addition, do not share items that may come in contact with the eyes, such as towels and bed sheets.