

# Facts about Pinkeye (Conjunctivitis)

**Pinkeye is an infection of the thin tissue the eyeball and the inside of the eyelid.** A virus usually causes pinkeye but it can also be caused by bacteria.

Children with pinkeye often say their eyes hurt or itch.

The whites of the eyes turn pink or red and there may be a lot of tears or pus in the eyes. The pus often makes the eyelids stick together when the child wakes up.

## How is Pinkeye Spread?

**Pinkeye spreads easily when:**

- a child touches the discharge from the eye and then touches another child
- a child touches the discharge from another child and then touches his or her own eye
- an adult wipes an infected child's eyes and then touches an eye

Too much rubbing or allergies may also cause the whites of the eyes to turn red and feel sore. There may be lots of tears but there will be no pus. These kinds of eye problems are not catching. A doctor will be able to tell the difference.

Not all cases of pinkeye need antibiotics. Children with pinkeye should see a doctor to see if the pinkeye is caused by bacteria and if an antibiotic is needed.



## What to Do at Home

- If another child has pinkeye watch your child for signs of pinkeye.
- **Talk to your doctor** if your child has pinkeye. It is not easy to tell if pinkeye is caused by a virus or by bacteria. The doctor may prescribe an antibiotic for your child.
- Wash your own and your child's hands carefully after touching or wiping the child's eyes, nose or mouth.
- Do not let your child share facecloths or towels with anyone. This could spread the infection.
- Clean objects commonly touched by the child's hands or face, such as pillowcases, cuddle blankets and toys.
- Try not to rub or touch the infected eye. A cloth dipped in warm water can be used to gently remove any discharge.



**When your child has pinkeye, your health care provider can tell you if your child can return to school or child care centre, or should stay home. If your child's health care provider has prescribed antibiotic drops or ointment, your child should use the antibiotic for a full day (24 hours) before returning to the child care centre or school.**