



# Redlands Unified School District

## Health Services Department

P.O. Box 3008 • Redlands, California 92373 • (909) 307-5300 • FAX (909) 307-5328

### CONJUNCTIVITIS (“PINK EYE”)

**CAUSE AND DEFINITION:**

- Conjunctivitis, commonly called "pinkeye" is an inflammation of the membrane that lines the eyelids and extends over the whites of the eyes (sclera).
- Conjunctivitis can be caused by bacteria, virus, allergy or immune response, a chemical or irritant

**Characteristics:**

<p><b><u>Bacterial Conjunctivitis</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May affect one or both eyes</li> <li>• Green or yellow discharge</li> <li>• May be crusted shut when awakening</li> <li>• Red or pink, minimal itchy, painful eye</li> <li>• Blurred vision that clears with blinking</li> <li>• Not contagious if medications started</li> <li>• Less common in children older than 5 years</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Viral Conjunctivitis</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pink, swollen, watery eyes; minimal itch</li> <li>• Starts with one eye; may affect both</li> <li>• Sensitivity to light (“photophobia”)</li> <li>• Contagious until signs, symptoms gone</li> <li>• Can occur with symptoms of a cold, flu, or other respiratory infection</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>Allergic Conjunctivitis</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Usually affects both eyes, but not always</li> <li>• Itchiness, redness and excessive tearing</li> <li>• Intense itching, burning, rubbing</li> <li>• Nasal linings often also swollen and pale</li> <li>• Not contagious</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Conjunctivitis Caused by Irritants (e.g., chlorine)</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can produce watery eyes and mucus discharge</li> <li>• Usually within minutes to hours after swimming or shortly after contact with irritating substance</li> <li>• Red, watery eyes</li> </ul>

**MODE OF TRANSMISSION & CONTROL**

Bacterial and viral conjunctivitis may be transmitted by:

- Contact with eye discharge
- Contaminated fingers, clothing, or other articles
- Upper respiratory tract of infected persons

Bacterial conjunctivitis can resolve without antibiotic treatment; it’s usually caused by the same bacteria that are normally found in throats and noses of many people and usually does not cause a problem. Most resolve in 5-6 days with or without antibiotics.

**HOME MANAGEMENT**

- Contact your child’s physician immediately if there is pain, swelling or severe photophobia (very sensitive to light).
- Persons suspected of having conjunctivitis may be seen by a physician for appropriate diagnosis, treatment, and follow up. But this is voluntary, and documentation of the visit for school is not required.
- Good hand washing technique before and after touching the eyes, nose and mouth. Sanitation of objects commonly touched by hands or faces (e.g., toys).

**RETURN TO SCHOOL**

- Keep child home from school only if: child too ill to participate in school, pink eye is accompanied by fever, if requested by health department because of an outbreak, or recommended by child’s own doctor. Antibiotics are not required to return to school.