

Conjunctivitis

Conjunctivitis is a very common condition seen in the school setting. It is spread in the same manner as the common cold. The information below is from the University of Virginia Department of Pediatric Infectious Diseases:

1. Viral Pink Eye: about 20-40 % of all cases; is highly contagious but not helped by antibiotics. It is usually a symptom of a respiratory tract infection such as a cold. It usually clears up on its own in 3-5 days.
2. Bacterial Pink Eye: about 50% of all case, there is scant evidence that it is transmissible from person to person. Topical antibiotics are usually prescribed to treat and ease discomfort, though most cases clear up in 4-5 days even without treatment.
3. Allergic Pink Eye: less common and less serious; produces itching, puffy, swollen eyes. Antihistamine eye drops may help.
4. Irritant or injury-related conjunctivitis – not contagious

Based on clinical research, physicians recommend the following as the new criteria for school exclusion:

- Blurry eyesight
- Eyes that are painful or sensitive to light
- Purulent discharge from the eyes lasting more than 2 days

Students may return to school after being sent home with the above symptoms if:

- Symptoms subside OR
- Student provides a doctor's note that they may return to school