

Lancaster ISD

School Health Services



Conjunctivitis "Pink Eye"

Dear Lancaster ISD Parent or Guardian:

We have recently had students diagnosed with **Conjunctivitis**, commonly referred to as "**Pink Eye**." Therefore, we felt it necessary to share with you the following information:

What Is Pinkeye?

Pinkeye is a common name for conjunctivitis, a condition that causes inflammation and redness of the membranes inside the eyes. Viruses, bacterial infections, allergies, or chemical agents can cause pinkeye. Sometimes, it is the result of a chronic medical condition. Most commonly, a virus or bacterial infection causes pinkeye.

Is Pinkeye Contagious?

Infectious forms of pinkeye are highly contagious. It is easily transmitted among humans through contact with an infected person or objects that are shared with an infected person. Coughing and sneezing are other possible ways in which Pinkeye can be spread. Children with pinkeye will need to stay home from school or daycare for a short period of time. Pinkeye that occurs due to allergic reactions or contact with chemical agents is not contagious.

Diagnosing Pinkeye

Pinkeye can often be diagnosed simply by observing the typical symptoms and signs listed below.

Symptoms:

- **Eye Redness**
- **Swollen, Red Eyelids**
- **Lots of Tearing**
- **Itchy or Burning Eyes**
- **Drainage from the Eyes**
- **Crusty Eyelids**
- **Sensitivity to Light**
- **Foreign Feeling in the Eye**

Pinkeye Treatment

Antibiotics, in the form of ointment, eye drops, or pills, is the recommended treatment for bacterial pinkeye.

- **Viral Infections** - Antibiotics do not work for viral infections and there is no specific treatment. The viral infection typically lasts for four to seven days.
- **Allergy-induced** - The treatment of allergies can help improve symptoms of allergic pinkeye.
- **Chemical** - This should be treated immediately by a doctor after washing the affected eye for five minutes.

Relieving Symptoms

Cold or warm compresses applied to the eyes can help clear the discharge associated with viral or bacterial pinkeye. Use a different washcloth for each eye, and use clean washcloths each time you wash. Wiping from the inside to the outside of the eye area is the best way to clean the eyes.

How Long Is Pinkeye Contagious?

If symptoms have improved, you can usually go back to school or work 24 hours after starting antibiotics for bacterial pinkeye. Viral pinkeye is different, and you can spread the condition as long as you have symptoms. Your doctor can tell you when it is safe to return to work or school.

Pinkeye Prevention

Always wash your hands well and frequently if you or your child has pinkeye, and try not to touch the eye area. Wash your hands after applying medications to the eyes. To avoid spreading the infection, do not share towels or other products, change linens and towels daily, disinfect surfaces like countertops and doorknobs, and throw away tissues after each use. If you use makeup, throw away any makeup that you used on the eye area while infected.

Thank you, Lancaster ISD Health Services