



# Fact Sheet: Pinkeye

## What is Pinkeye?

Pinkeye is an infection of the eye and eyelid caused by either bacteria or a virus. Pinkeye is very easily passed on to other people.

## What are the symptoms?

- Red and swollen eyelid
- Pain or itching in the eyes
- Thick yellow drainage from the eyes
- Sensitivity of the eyes to light
- Watery eyes

If only one eye is red and swollen, usually the other eye will become red and swollen within a few days.

## How is it spread?

Pinkeye is spread through direct contact with the discharge from the infected person's eyes or respiratory tract. You can get pinkeye from someone's fingers, from sharing their eye makeup, from clothing, and from towels and washcloths.

## How is it treated?

- If you think you have been infected, see your health care provider for treatment recommendations.
- Take all medications as prescribed even if you start to feel better.
- If the drainage makes your eyelashes stick together, especially in the morning, put a warm wet washcloth on your eye to soften the crusts. This may need to be repeated several times. Gently wipe the crusts from your eyelashes.
- Do not scratch or rub your eyes - it will make the infection worse. Use a tissue to gently wipe your eyes and then throw it away in a covered wastebasket.

A child with pinkeye needs to stay away from others until 24 hours after treatment has begun.

## How is it prevented?

Handwashing and general cleanliness is the best way NOT to get pinkeye. Each person in the home should have his or her own towel and washcloth. Be sure to wash towels and washcloths in hot soapy water. Keep hands away from your eyes - avoid rubbing and scratching eyes with dirty hands.

*This fact sheet is for information only and is not meant to be used for self-diagnosis or as a substitute for consultation with a health care provider. For more information call your health care provider 257-3612.*

Visit our website at: [www.gchd.us](http://www.gchd.us) or the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention at: [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

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