Beverly Hills Pediatrics

Medical Topics

EYE CONCERNS

There are many different causes of pink eye or an eye with yellow discharge. Since there are many different causes of conjunctivitis and they are usually not dangerous, pink eye will not be treated over the phone. Any suspected eye concern should be seen by your doctor in the office in order to differentiate the proper cause and treatment course. Most of the causes are self resolving or can be treated with a short course of eye drops. The following is a list of common causes for a pink eye or an eye with goopy, yellow discharge. **CALL YOUR DOCTOR IF: Swelling all around the eye, Eye is bulging outward (proptosis), or the eye is painful when you touch or move it.**

Infection

Cause: Viral Infection

Symptoms:
- White of the eye looks pink or red
- Little to no discharge from eye
- May have other viral symptoms such as runny nose, cough, nasal congestion, or fever

Treatment:
- None
- Thorough eye washing
- Self-resolves. Antibiotics will not help the eye get better any faster.

Cause: Bacterial Infection (The bacteria is often introduced when a child rubs their eyes)

Symptoms:
- White of the eye looks very red and bloodshot
- Yellow, goopy discharge

Treatment:
- Antibiotic eye drops
- Wash eyes with warm compresses
- Although bacterial conjunctivitis needs to be treated with antibiotics, it is usually not emergent. Each child should be seen by a doctor prior to starting the eye drops to make sure the right medicine is prescribed.

Contagiousness:
- Both bacterial & viral conjunctivitis passed by direct contact. For example, when a child with conjunctivitis touches their eyes & then directly touches someone else's eyes
- Passed by another object. For example, when a child with conjunctivitis rubs their eyes and plays with a toy and then another child plays with the same toy and then touches their eyes without washing their hands.

Prevention:
- Thorough hand washing or use of Purell
- Avoid rubbing eyes
- Use different face towels and pillow cases

Allergic

Symptoms:
- White of the eye is pink with watery discharge or tearing
- Itchy eyes
- May have other signs of allergies such as nasal congestion, dark circles under eyes, nose rubbing.

Treatment:
- Allergy eye drops such as Patanol
- Oral non-drowsy anti-histamines such as Claritin or Zyrtec

Dacrostenosis (clogged tear duct)

Cause:
- Clogged tear duct- common in newborns & infants in the first year of life.
- Tear ducts run from the corner of the eyes (nearest to our nose) down the side of the nose and empty both into the eyes and the nose. That is why you may have a runny nose when you cry. In infants, the tear duct is often not fully open and can back-up.

Symptoms:
- Yellow, goopy discharge from eyes (eyes may be glued shut when waking up from sleep)
- The white of the eye is Not pink or red
- Eyelids may be a little red from the irritation of the discharge or from wiping the eye

Treatment:
- Massage. Massage the tear duct by rubbing your little finger up & down along the duct to help push out the obstruction and open the duct. When you do this, you may actually see discharge expressed into the corner of the eye.
- Breast Milk. Put some breast milk on your finger & drip into the corner of the eye. Breast milk will help lubricate the duct & contains antibodies that will help prevent infection.
- Warm compresses. Gently wipe the eye with a warm compress to remove the sticky discharge.

Overflow

Cause: Since the eyes and nose are connected, any child with nasal congestion may develop eye discharge as well.

Symptoms:
- Yellow discharge from the eyes (the discharge may be worst when waking from sleep)
- The white of the eye is Not pink or red
- Nasal congestion or runny nose

Treatment: None