Conjunctivitis

Infection Prevention

Patient information

What is conjunctivitis?
Conjunctivitis is a common infection of the eye. It usually affects the lining of the eyelids and the outer protective layer of the eye (the conjunctiva). It can be caused by a virus or bacteria.

Who is most at risk?
Anyone can get conjunctivitis. Children under 5 years of age and the elderly are most at risk.

What are the symptoms?
Symptoms may occur in one eye or both eyes, and include:
- Irritation
- Redness
- Excessive tears
- Pus or discharge
- Swelling of the eyelid
- Photophobia (extreme sensitivity to light).

Symptoms of conjunctivitis can last from two days to three weeks.

How is conjunctivitis spread?
Conjunctivitis is highly contagious.

It spreads when you come into contact with the discharge from an infected person’s eyes, nose or throat. This may be through direct contact, or touching a contaminated surface.

A person with conjunctivitis is infectious to others for the whole time that they have symptoms.

I have conjunctivitis
How will I be cared for in hospital?

Isolation: You will be cared for in a single room whilst you have symptoms of conjunctivitis. Health care staff will wear a gown and gloves when caring for you. This is to reduce the risk of spreading conjunctivitis to the other patients they are caring for.
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Contact information
Ph: 03 9076 3139

Infection Prevention
– The Alfred
55 Commercial Road,
Melbourne VIC 3004
Tel: (03) 9076 2000

alfredhealth.org.au

Any questions?
If you would like further
information about
Conjunctivitis, please contact
Alfred Health Infection
Prevention on (03) 9076 3139.

Further information:
Better Health Channel
www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au

Health VIC
https://www2.health.vic.gov.au

If you would like to provide
feedback or request a copy in a
different format, contact us at
patient.info@alfred.org.au

Hand hygiene: It is important that staff, patients and visitors
always clean their hands every time they enter or leave your
room or cubicle. They can use alcohol-based hand rub or
soap and water.

It's OK to ask: Please feel free to remind your healthcare
worker to clean their hands.

Cleaning: Your room will be cleaned and disinfected as usual,
with a focus on surfaces that are frequently touched.

As a patient, what should I do?
- Always clean your hands before and after touching your
  eyes or face.
- Use soap and water, or alcohol-based hand rub to clean
  your hands.
- Dispose any tissues used on your eyes immediately and
  then clean your hands using soap and water or alcohol
  based hand rub.

What should my visitors do?
Visitors should always clean their hands with soap and water
or alcohol-based hand rub before visiting you, and on leaving
your room.

They do not need to wear gowns and gloves.

It is important that they avoid touching their eyes and face.

They should also avoid touching your eyes or any tissues you
may have been using.