

CONJUNCTIVITIS

(pink-eye)

REPORTING INFORMATION

- Class C
- Report outbreak by end of next working day
- [Confidential Case Report Card](#) (3812.11 rev.12/81) or Telephone

AGENT

Several bacteria, viruses, fungi, or environmental allergens

CASE DEFINITION

Inflammation of the conjunctiva of the eye, often with a discharge which might be purulent.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

As above, often accompanied by pain

DIAGNOSIS

Culture of specific organism and medical evaluation is required for identification of source.

EPIDEMIOLOGY

Irritants, such as pollens or dust, are found in the environment. Infectious agents can be bacteria, fungi, or viruses. They are transmitted by direct inoculation, such as rubbing the eye with a contaminated hand. Other sources range from shared towels to swimming in contaminated water, application of contaminated cosmetics, or instruments. Droplet contamination of the mucous membrane of the eye can also occur through coughs, sneezes, and splashes of infectious agents or irritants.

PUBLIC HEALTH MANAGEMENT

Case

Treatment is dependent on the causative agent. Symptomatic relief might be all that is required for viral infections or allergic responses to environmental sources. Topical antibiotics are required for the management of bacterial infections. Drainage and secretion precautions should be followed.

Contact

Persons who have been exposed to infectious agents should be notified to seek medical help if symptoms occur. Symptomatic newborns should be evaluated and treated as soon as possible.

Prevention and Control

Investigation of clustered cases should include education about the risk of hand to eye contact, contamination of eye products, and other environmental sources. The importance of hand washing and use of disposable tissues should be emphasized. Exclusion for 24 hours after antibiotic treatment is advisable in the child care and often in the school setting.