

## **CONJUNCTIVITIS**

(Pink Eye)

### **REPORTING INFORMATION**

While conjunctivitis is not an individually reportable condition in Ohio, outbreaks are required to be reported. In addition, there are specific isolation requirements for individuals with conjunctivitis.

### **AGENT**

Several bacteria, viruses, fungi or environmental allergens.

### **CASE DEFINITION**

Inflammation of the conjunctiva of the eye, with edema of the lids and mucopurulent discharge.

### **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. Transmission occurs 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 may 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.

#### **Isolation**

Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) 3701-3-13 (E) states:

"Conjunctivitis, purulent-: a person with purulent conjunctivitis who attends or works in a child care center shall be excluded from the child care center and may return twenty-four hours after the initiation of effective antimicrobial therapy."

#### **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.