



Central Michigan District Health Department

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“Just The Facts”

Pink-Eye

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What is Pink-eye?

Pink-eye is an infection of the eye and eyelid caused by a bacterial germ. The germ is found in the yellowish drainage from the eye. It can be easily passed on to other people.

What are the symptoms of Pink-eye?

A person with Pink-eye has these signs:

- Red and swollen eyelid
- Pain or itching in the eyes
- Thick yellow drainage from the eye
- Sensitivity of 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.

What is the treatment for Pink-eye?

- 1) You should see your doctor. Your doctor will prescribe some eye drops or ointment. Follow your doctor's directions carefully. Do not stop using the medicine even if your eye looks better – it may be that the bacterial germ is not completely gone yet even though your eye looks and feels better.
- 2) If the drainage makes your eyelashes stick together, especially in the morning, put a warm wet washcloth on your eye to soften the crust. This may need to be repeated several times. Gently clear the crusts from your eyelashes.
- 3) Use separate washcloths and towels. Be sure to wash towels and washcloths in hot soapy water.
- 4) Do not scratch or rub your eyes – it will make the infection worse. Use a tissue like Kleenex to gently wipe your eye and then throw it away in a covered wastebasket.
- 5) A child with Pink-eye needs to stay away from others until 24-hours after treatment has begun.

How can I keep from getting Pink-eye?

- Hand washing and general cleanliness is the best way **not** to get Pink-eye
- Each person in the home should use their own towel and washcloth
- Keep hands away from eyes – avoid rubbing and scratching eyes with dirty hands