

Your child may have been exposed to:

Pink Eye

Conjunctivitis (pink eye) is redness and soreness of the eye. Pink eye is usually caused by viruses or bacteria.

If you think your child has pink eye, tell your childcare provider or call the school.

Does my child need to stay home from childcare or school? No, unless your child has a fever or is not healthy enough to participate in routine activities. Antibiotics or a note from a health care provider are not required to return to childcare or school.

For more information, call Hennepin County HSPHD-Epidemiology at 612-543-5230 or call your local health department.

Symptoms

Your child may have redness, itching, pain, and drainage from the eyes. Your child may have a fever.

If your child is infected, it usually takes 1 to 3 days for symptoms to start.

Spread

- By touching secretions from the eyes, nose, or mouth.
- By touching hands, objects, or surfaces contaminated with secretions.

Contagious period

While symptoms are present.

Call your health care provider

- If your child has thick drainage from the eye. Your doctor will decide if treatment is needed. If the infection is caused by a virus, no specific antiviral treatment is usually needed. Antibiotic treatment may be prescribed if a bacterial infection is diagnosed. Most children with pink eye get better after 5 or 6 days without antibiotics.

Prevention

- Cover nose and mouth when sneezing or coughing. Use a tissue or your sleeve. Dispose of used tissues in the trash.
- Wash hands after touching anything that could be contaminated with secretions from the eyes, nose, or mouth. Your child may need help with handwashing.
- Clean and disinfect objects that come in contact with secretions from the eyes, nose, or mouth. Use a product that kills germs.
- Do not share anything that touches the eyes, such as towels, washcloths, eye makeup, contact lens solution, or eye drops.
- Discourage rubbing and touching the eyes. Keep your child's eyes wiped free of drainage.
- Use a cotton-tipped swab to apply medication.