

**MONROE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH  
DISEASE CONTROL UNIT 753-5164**

**Conjunctivitis  
(Pink Eye)**

**What is conjunctivitis?**

Conjunctivitis is a viral or bacterial infection of the eye.

**Who gets conjunctivitis?**

Anyone who has contact with the discharges from an infected eye may contract it. However, children are most often affected.

**How is it spread?**

Transmission of conjunctivitis may occur through contact with discharges from an infected eye. This includes contaminated fingers, clothing, and other articles, including shared eye make-up applicators.

**What are the symptoms?**

The symptoms may include clear or thick drainage, tearing, irritation, reddening of one or both eyes, swelling of the lids, and/or moderate discomfort.

**How soon do symptoms appear?**

Symptoms may occur 12 hours to several days after contact, depending on the organism that is causing the infection.

**When and for how long is a person able to spread it?**

The length of time one may be contagious with conjunctivitis is unknown, but assumed to be for the period of active disease, usually about one week. Children should not attend school until they have been evaluated by a physician.

**What is the treatment?**

- If it appears to be a bacterial conjunctivitis, your physician may prescribe ointment or drops containing antibiotics.
- If it appears to be a viral infection, antibiotic treatment is not necessary.