

## GUIDELINES FOR TREATMENT OF INFECTIVE CONJUNCTIVITIS

### OFFER THE FOLLOWING SELF CARE ADVICE FOR INFECTIVE CONJUNCTIVITIS:

- **Infective conjunctivitis is a self-limiting illness** that, for most people, settles without treatment within 1–2 weeks. If symptoms persist for longer than 2 weeks they should re-consult for investigation of the cause.
- **To urgently seek medical attention** if they develop marked eye pain or photophobia, loss of visual acuity, or marked redness of the eye.
- **To remove contact lenses**, if worn, until all symptoms and signs of infection have completely resolved and any treatment has been completed for 24 hours.
- **That lubricant eye drops may reduce eye discomfort**; these are available over the counter, as well as on prescription.
- **To clean away infected secretions** from eyelids and lashes with cotton wool soaked in water.
- **To wash their hands regularly**, particularly after touching infected secretions, and to avoid sharing pillows and towels to avoid spreading infection.

### CONSIDER AN OCULAR ANTIBIOTIC WITH INFECTIVE CONJUNCTIVITIS WHEN:

- Infective conjunctivitis is severe, or likely to become severe, providing serious causes of a red eye can be confidently excluded.
- **When a topical ocular antibiotic is prescribed because of the person's preference for treatment**, consider advising them to delay starting treatment for 7 days to see if the condition will resolve spontaneously.

### IMPORTANT

The use of a topical ocular antibiotic in most people makes little difference to recovery from infective conjunctivitis (<https://cks.nice.org.uk/conjunctivitis-infective>)

- Up to 10% of people treated with topical ocular antibiotics complain of adverse reactions to treatment.
- The risk of a serious complication from untreated infective conjunctivitis is low.
- There are no agreed definitions of mild, moderate, or severe conjunctivitis. It would seem reasonable to consider infective conjunctivitis to be severe when the person considers the symptoms to be distressing or signs are judged to be severe from clinical experience.

## GP ADVICE ONLY

### CHOICE OF TOPICAL OCULAR ANTIBIOTIC

- **Prescribe chloramphenicol first-line** for empirical treatment of infective conjunctivitis when a topical ocular antibiotic is considered necessary.
- **Fusidic acid is an alternative** empirical treatment. It is preferred for people who:
  - Are pregnant.
  - Have a personal or family history of blood dyscrasias, such as aplastic anaemia.
  - Are intolerant of chloramphenicol.
  - Prefer a twice-a-day treatment for infective conjunctivitis.

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