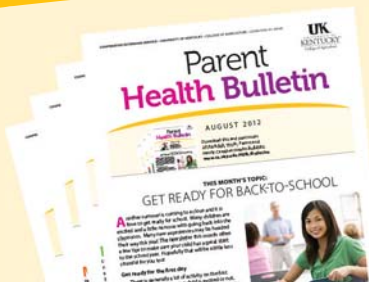


Parent Health Bulletin



OCTOBER 2012

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THIS MONTH'S TOPIC: PINKEYE

It is not uncommon for a child to get pinkeye. In fact, it is one of the most common childhood eye infections. Pinkeye, also known as conjunctivitis, is usually seen when the whites of the eyes become red or pink. Kids can pass it to each other easily at school.

There are several reasons for pinkeye. Some people can get pinkeye from allergies or an irritation, like a piece of dirt in the eye. More commonly, pinkeye is caused by a virus or bacteria. There are some types of pinkeye that go away on their own. However, some require treatment by a healthcare provider prescription.

What are the signs of pinkeye?

Your child may have pinkeye if you see any of the following:

- Your child complains that her eye itches a lot or that it feels like there is something in her eye

Continued on the back →



If you notice that your child has pinkeye, you should call your healthcare provider.

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- The whites of the child's eye are red or pink
- There is a pus-like liquid draining from the eye
- The eyelids are stuck together or matted-down in the morning
- The eyes are itchy

What do you do if you see that your child has pinkeye?

If you notice that your child has pinkeye, you should call your healthcare provider. Treatment by the provider may be antibiotic drops or ointment. You should try to keep the eye as clean as possible. To clean the eye, wipe with a warm wet cotton ball and throw it away after so that no one else will be exposed. If your child is complaining about the itchiness, place a cool wet washcloth over the eyes. It is possible that your child will need to stay home from school until he or she has been on the antibiotics that the healthcare provider has prescribed.

It is important to wash your hands often, but especially after touching your eyes or helping your child with his or her pinkeye.

Can you prevent pinkeye?

Pinkeye does tend to spread easily from child-to-child and person-to-person. It is important to wash your hands often, but especially after touching your eyes or helping your child with his or her pinkeye. Do not allow sharing of towels, washcloths or pillows.

If it seems like your child gets pinkeye a lot, it could be an allergen. To help prevent allergens from irritating the eyes you should vacuum frequently and avoid second-hand smoke, which can bother the eyes. Some household cleaners also have strong smells and can irritate the eyes.

Keeping your child free from pinkeye may be a challenge, but it is likely that you can minimize the discomfort.

SOURCE:

Nemours KidsHealth. Pinkeye Fact Sheet. Updated Jan. 2012 http://kidshealth.org/parent/firstaid_safe/sheets/pinkeye_sheet.html



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