
Introduction

This leaflet has been designed to give you information about **bacterial conjunctivitis** and answer some of the questions that you or those who care for you may have. It is not meant to replace the discussion between you and your medical team but aims to help you understand more about what is discussed. If you have any questions about the information below, please contact us.

What is bacterial conjunctivitis?

Conjunctivitis is an infection of the conjunctiva. This is the mucous membrane which covers the white part of the eye called the sclera. The infection is caused by bacteria irritating the surface of the membrane.

What are the signs/symptoms?

Symptoms typically develop in one eye, but may spread to the other. You may see or feel some or all of the following:

- swollen eye lids
- red eye lids
- a gritty/sandy feeling when you blink
- opaque discharge & subsequent crusting

Treatment

Bacterial conjunctivitis usually resolves without treatment. However, you may be prescribed antibiotic eye drops or an eye ointment.

You can use a clean flannel soaked in warm water to remove sticky discharge and secretions from your eyelids.

Simple over the counter painkillers may be helpful in relieving some of the discomfort or any flu-like symptoms you experience.

There is usually no follow up appointment required but if the condition is particularly severe, an appointment to come to the clinic may be arranged.

Contact lenses

You should **not** wear contact lenses until the symptoms have cleared completely.

Is there anything I can do to help myself?

If you are particularly sensitive to light, wearing dark glasses may help.

The infection is highly contagious and anything in contact with your tears or secretions from your eyes is at risk of infection.

Please use your own and do not share the

following:

- towel
- flannel
- pillow case and change them as often as possible

Do not touch your face and **wash your hands frequently**.

When using ointment and eye drops **do not** let the nozzle touch your eyes or eye lashes.

You may need some time off work and children **should not** go to school for at least one week or until the eye no longer looks red or sore

Who can I contact for more information?

If you have any questions or concerns, please call:

Ophthalmology emergency department:
020 3312 3245

Western Eye Hospital eye clinic:
020 3312 3236

Charing Cross Hospital eye clinic:
020 3311 0137

How do I make a comment about my visit?

We aim to provide the best possible service and staff will be happy to answer any of the questions you may have. If you have any **suggestions** or **comments** about your visit, please either speak to a member of staff or contact the patient advice and liaison service (**PALS**) on **020 3313 0088** (Charing Cross, Hammersmith and Queen Charlotte's & Chelsea hospitals), or **020 3312 7777** (St Mary's and Western Eye hospitals). You can also email PALS at imperial.pals@nhs.net The PALS team will listen to your concerns, suggestions or queries and is often able to help solve problems on your behalf.

Alternatively, you may wish to complain by contacting our complaints department:

Complaints department, fourth floor, Salton House, St Mary's Hospital, Praed Street London W2 1NY

Email: ICHC-tr.Complaints@nhs.net

Telephone: **020 3312 1337 / 1349**

Alternative formats

This leaflet can be provided on request in large print or easy read, as a sound recording, in Braille or in alternative languages. Please email the communications team:

imperial.communications@nhs.net

Wi-fi

Wi-fi is available at our Trust. For more information visit our website:

www.imperial.nhs.uk

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Ophthalmology department

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Information for patients, relatives and carers