

Treatment for allergic eye disease

General measures

- **Try not to rub your eyes**, as this can increase the irritation.
- **Bathing the eyes** with a flannel soaked in cold water or with an over-the-counter 'eye bath' may ease symptoms.
- **Avoid the cause of the allergy**, if possible. For example, close windows, drive with windows shut and internal air circulation on in your car, and by wear wrap-around sunglasses when out, Use glasses while riding a two wheeler.
- **Change of environment**- some people are more comfortable away from present environment. Shifting out, usually to drier environment, helps in some extreme cases.

Eye drops that reduce the allergic reaction are often prescribed. Tablets may also be prescribed, and injections have been used in the past.

You should see a doctor if you are uncertain what is causing your symptoms and the symptoms do not settle within a few days. Also, see a doctor urgently if any of the following occur:

- Symptoms change (for example, light starts to hurt your eyes).
- You have pain in the eye (mild soreness rather than pain is usual with conjunctivitis).
- Your vision is reduced.

The eye becomes very red - in particular, if it is on one side only

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Eye Allergy

Patient education leaflet





Allergic conjunctivitis causes red, watery, itchy or gritty eyes. It does not affect vision. The most common cause is an allergy to pollen in the hay fever season. Other causes are house dust mite, pollutants in air, cosmetics, and problems with contact lenses. Eye drops usually ease symptoms.

What causes allergic conjunctivitis?

Allergy means that the immune system overreacts to something to which it has become sensitive. Symptoms of increased immune activity include redness, wateriness, itching and sticky ropy discharge. These are part of the body's defense mechanism to things it sees as foreign and harmful.

Eye drops usually work well. You need to use them regularly to keep symptoms away until the cause of the allergy goes. Some people find one product works better than another. Therefore, if the first does not work so well, a switch to another may help. If your eyelids are very swollen, it may take several days for the drops to ease symptoms fully.

What are the symptoms of allergic conjunctivitis?

- Both eyes are usually affected
- Eyes become red
- Eyes water more than usual
- The eyes are usually itchy and gritty.
- A burning feeling may occur, although the eyes are not usually painful.
- The eyelids tend to swell.
- There may be mucoid discharge at the corner of eye lids.

Are there any possible complications?

Allergic conjunctivitis can be unpleasant, but complications are rare.

Very severe allergic conjunctivitis can occasionally cause inflammation and ulceration of the cornea (keratitis). Some permanent loss of vision may occur if these are left untreated.

Frequent eye rubbing is known to be associated with a condition called Keratoconus.