

# Idaho Falls Pediatrics

## Eye Infection: Viral

### Illustration of conjunctivitis

#### What is a viral eye infection?

A viral eye infection is caused by a virus. This condition is also called pink eye or viral conjunctivitis.

Your child may have:

- redness of the white part of the eye (sclera)
- redness of the inner eyelids
- puffy eyelids
- a watery eye.

#### What is the cause?

Red eyes are usually caused by a viral infection and they often occur when a child has a cold. If a bacterial infection occurs, discharge from the eyes becomes yellow and the eyelids are often matted together after sleeping. If this happens, your child needs antibiotic eyedrops even if the eyes are not red.

#### How long does it last?

Viral conjunctivitis usually lasts as long as the cold (1 to 2 weeks).

#### How can I take care of my child?

- **Rinse out with water:** Rinse the eyes with warm water as often as possible, at least every 1 or 2 hours while your child is awake. Use a fresh, wet cotton ball each time. This rinsing usually will keep a bacterial infection from occurring.

- **No eyedrops:** A viral infection is not helped by eyedrops.
- **Contagiousness:** Pink eye is harmless and mildly contagious. Children with viral conjunctivitis can attend day care or school.

### **When should I call Idaho Falls Pediatrics?**

Call IMMEDIATELY if:

- The eyelids become very red or swollen.
- Your child develops blurred vision or eye pain.

Call within 24 hours if:

- A yellow discharge develops.
- The redness lasts more than 7 days.
- You have other concerns or questions.

\*NOTE: This information is provided as a public educational service. The information does not replace any of the instructions your physician gives you. If you have a medical emergency please call 911 or call the Hospital at (208) 529-6111. If you have questions about your child's care, please call Idaho Falls Pediatrics at (208) 522-4600.