

CONJUNCTIVITIS

Level II
(No Level I)

Skill Level: RN

Definition: Conjunctivitis is an inflammation of the conjunctiva generally due to bacterial or viral infections. This condition may also result from allergies, chemical irritation, flash burns or fungal infections.

<p>Subjective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Obtain history of illness and visual acuity history.• "I wake up with crusty eyelids."• "There's infection (pus) in my eyes."• Burning sensation, itchy, watery eyes, abnormal discharge.	<p>Assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Alteration in:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ comfort○ visual acuity• Conjunctivitis related to:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ possible bacterial or viral infection
<p>Objective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Excessive blinking/tearing.• Conjunctival inflammation, swelling and/or pus.• Test visual acuity if indicated. Should be similar to baseline for patient.• Patient may be uncomfortable, but eye pain is not present.	<p>Plan:</p> <p>At nursing discretion may use any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Check for allergies to medications.• Ask about contact lenses. Remove and stop use of contact lenses until seen by a physician and approved to resume use.• If eye is painful, SEE Eye Pain Protocol.• Many eye infections are viral or due to allergies and do not respond to topical antibiotic drops. If pus or redness not obvious or severe, do not use antibiotic drops. (See "Nursing Education" below.)• If suspect bacterial infection, Sodium Sulamyd 10%, or Tobrex ophthalmic suspension 2 drops TID to QID in affected eye x 5 days.• Nurse follow-up appointment in 24-48 hours.• Refer to practitioner for evaluation if no improvement in 48 hours.

Nursing Education:

1. Bacterial Conjunctivitis is uncommon compared to Allergic or Viral Conjunctivitis.
2. Findings that support a bacterial cause include conjunctival redness and swelling, tearing, and a gritty sensation to the eye. There is usually a stringy, pus-like discharge that causes the lids to stick together, especially after sleeping.
3. A unilateral eye infection is more frequently bacterial.
4. The viral type is often associated with an upper respiratory tract infection, cold, or sore throat.
5. When related to allergies, the symptoms are often seasonal. Patients will usually have a history of allergies.

Patient Teaching and Precautions:

1. Do not rub eye(s).
2. Instruct on frequent, careful hand washing - use clean towel.
3. Explain to the patient the purpose of medical treatment.
4. Avoid eye cosmetics until resolution.
5. Advise patient not to wear contact lenses if they are normally used.

APPROVED:

Health Services Manager

Date

Chief Medical Officer

Date

Stan Sherman MD

Medical Director

3/3/09

Date

Effective Date: 3/09
Revised: January 2009