

**KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT
HEALTH SERVICES**

**CONJUNCTIVITIS
(PINK EYE)**

Date _____

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Conjunctivitis, often known as Pink Eye, has recently been reported in our school population.

WHAT IS CONJUNCTIVITIS

Conjunctivitis is an inflammation of the eye. It can be caused by a viral or bacterial infection or by allergies or chemicals (medication, gas fumes, chlorine from swimming pools, etc.).

Only infectious conjunctivitis (caused by a bacteria or virus) is contagious. It is spread from person to person by direct or indirect contact with the discharge from an infected eye. The average incubation period for conjunctivitis is 2-5 days.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

An eye that is suspicious for conjunctivitis usually appears pink or red where it should be white. It is itchy and the eyelid(s) may be swollen. Discharge from the eye may be either thick or watery.

It's not possible to clearly tell the difference between viral and bacterial conjunctivitis without a culture of the discharge. Medication is available from your health care provider for both.

Additional symptoms i.e. fever, an earache, and/or swelling around the eye may be caused by a more serious condition and prompt medical attention should be obtained.

PREVENTION

Conjunctivitis can spread to the other eye by first touching the infected eye and then touching the other eye. It can also spread to another person when, after touching the infected eye the person touches toys, doorknobs, sink handles or other objects, and then the other person touches those same objects and then rubs their eye.

Handwashing is the single most important prevention in the spread of pink eye. Instruct your child to wash their hands thoroughly with soap several times a day. If someone in your home has conjunctivitis that person should use his/her own towel, washcloth and bedding.

CONJUNCTIVITIS AND SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

In the attempt to prevent its spread, students who have symptoms that are consistent with infectious conjunctivitis will be excluded from school. Children whose symptoms are consistent with allergic conjunctivitis will not be excluded.

Conjunctivitis may be treated with prescription medication that is put either directly into the eye or taken by mouth.

Children with conjunctivitis may return to school when they no longer have symptoms, after 24 hours of medication, or with a doctor's note saying they are not contagious.

Practicing good hygiene, especially frequent hand washing, helps to prevent the spread of infection. Questions? Please contact your school nurse or family medical provider.