

Be on the Lookout for Patients With Acute Conjunctivitis

Be prepared to help kids and adults with pink eye.

Acute conjunctivitis, or “pink eye,” is an inflammation of the conjunctiva of the eye...causing redness and eyelid swelling.

Viruses are the most common cause in adults and bacteria are the most common cause in kids...but conjunctivitis can also have noninfectious causes, such as allergies.

Pull in your pharmacist if you suspect a patient has symptoms of pink eye...so they can determine if a med is needed.

Alert the pharmacist to any red flag symptoms reported, such as vision changes, severe light sensitivity, or moderate to severe eye pain...these patients may need to be referred to a prescriber.

Patients with a rash or vesicles around the eye or on the eyelid may have a herpes or shingles infection and will also need to be referred.

Ask patients if they wear contact lenses...and make a note for your pharmacist if they say yes. Contacts should be removed immediately and the patient referred, since contacts can cause more serious issues, such as a corneal ulcer.

Expect your pharmacist to recommend symptom management, such as warm compresses to soften crusts in the morning...cool compresses to relieve swelling or itchiness...and a lubricating eye drop (*Soothe*, etc) as needed.

For suspected viral or bacterial causes, patients should avoid eye-hand contact...wash hands regularly...and follow local school and day care guidelines on staying home while contagious.

Remind patients with infectious causes to not share bedding or towels and to throw out any eye makeup that they've recently used.

Set up a reminder to check with patients in 2 to 3 days to see if their symptoms have improved. If symptoms aren't improving, they may need to be referred to a prescriber.

Find more ways to keep patients safe in our resource, *The Ins and Outs of Eye and Ear Meds*.

Key References:

- Mahoney MJ, Bekibele R, Notermann SL, et al. Pediatric Conjunctivitis: A Review of Clinical Manifestations, Diagnosis and Management. *Children* (Basel). 2023 Apr 29;10(5):808.
- Yeu E, Hauswirth S. A Review of the Differential Diagnosis of Acute Infectious Conjunctivitis: Implications for Treatment and Management. *Clin Ophthalmol*. 2020 Mar 12;14:805-813.
- Azari AA, Barney NP. Conjunctivitis: A Systematic Review of Diagnosis and Treatment. *JAMA*. 2013 Oct 23;310(16):1721-9.

Pharmacy Technician's Letter Canada. May 2024, No. 400521

Cite this document as follows: Article, Be on the Lookout for Patients With Acute Conjunctivitis, Pharmacy Technician's Letter Canada, May 2024

The content of this article is provided for educational and informational purposes only, and is not a substitute for the advice, opinion or diagnosis of a trained medical professional. If your organization is interested in an enterprise subscription, email sales@trchealthcare.com.

© 2024 Therapeutic Research Center (TRC). TRC and Pharmacy Technician's Letter Canada and the associated logo(s) are trademarks of Therapeutic Research Center. All Rights Reserved.