



St Thomas's Church Hall, 75 Monsell Road, London, 2EF N4  
playgroupleader@stthomasplaygroup.co.uk  
TEL. 0207 354 9347



## Conjunctivitis policy

Conjunctivitis is an inflammation of the outer lining of the eye and eyelid causing an itchy red eye with a sticky or watery discharge. It can be caused by bacteria or viruses or due to an allergy.

Conjunctivitis can be caused by bacteria or a virus and is treated with eye drops. Spread is by direct or indirect contact with discharge from the eyes. Prompt treatment and good handwashing helps to prevent spread especially after contact with infectious secretions.

### Symptoms

The eye(s) becomes reddened and swollen and there may be a sticky yellow or green discharge. Eyes usually feel itchy and 'gritty'.

### Treatment

- There is no exclusion period from preschool for conjunctivitis unless the child is feeling unwell. Parents are advised to seek advice.
- Most cases of infective conjunctivitis are viral and self-limiting and will clear up without treatment within a few days. Those that are not viral are caused by a bacterial infection. Up to 65% of bacterial cases resolve without antibiotic treatment by day five. Antibiotic eye drops or ointment are therefore only occasionally required to treat severe cases.
- Children over two years: to determine if treatment is necessary, we recommend that parents seek advice from a pharmacist. Parents do not need to book an appointment to see a pharmacist. Pharmacists will be able to advise parents and where appropriate recommend treatment or if necessary, refer on to the GP. Treatment for conjunctivitis can be purchased over the counter from pharmacies without the need for a prescription for children over the age of two.
- Cases can be managed by implementing some simple infection control measures:
  - Encourage children not to rub their eyes and to wash their hands frequently.
  - Avoid sharing towels, flannels or pillows.
  - Regular cleaning of items handled by children such as toys, pens etc.
- However, we are advised to contact our local Public Health England Health Protection Team if an outbreak or cluster occurs. If the number of cases exceed and the cases of conjunctivitis are not isolated, the nursery may have no option but to revise this policy following the advice given by Public Health England.

(Information taken from Public Health England)

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