



Always consult with a veterinarian that you feel comfortable with before diagnosing or treating any disease on your own. This information is for reference only.

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## Conjunctivitis

### Issue Description

*It is an inflammation of the membrane covering the inside of the eyelids and the front of the eye also called the mucous membranes of the eye. It often just affects one eye, although it can affect both. The eye becomes red and inflamed. There may be clear or mucous discharge from the eye.*

### Other Names

*Canine Pink Eye, Pink Eye*

### Causes

Canine Conjunctivitis or Dog Pinkeye comes in a number of different forms, and can be caused by a number of different factors. One of the most common causes is an irritant in the eye, which leads to inflammation and eventually infection. This can be anything from dirt to a piece of wood to a small insect. Damage to the eye can often result from a scuffle your dog as been in with another animal, leading to the development of pinkeye in many cases.

Aside from foreign bodies, Conjunctivitis is caused by either viral or bacterial infections. The bacterial variety is the most common form of this infection, and is typically spread by contact. This can mean contact with humans who are carrying the disease, other dogs, or even flying insects. The viral kind of Pinkeye is transmitted in much the same way. Some of the viruses that cause Pinkeye are airborne, and little can be done to protect against them. This kind of infection is much more common during the winter, when viruses tend to proliferate due to the humidity and dampness of the air. Another potential cause is an allergic reaction. Your dog may be sensitive to certain kinds of perfume, foods, or other allergens associated with the onset of spring. These allergens can cause sinus irritation as well as inflammation of the mucus membranes, and often leads to the development of Pinkeye.

### Symptoms

Along with the pronounced pink color in the eyeball, the surrounding tissue, such as the eyelid and other nearby areas, will become swollen or inflamed. The severity of inflammation varies with each case, ranging from a minor swelling to highly inflamed membranes, which can cause the eye to be swollen shut. In addition to the swelling, the infected eye will often begin to emit a distinctive discharge. While some eye discharge is actually quite normal in most dogs, with Canine Conjunctivitis the discharge will be far more pronounced, often mixed with pus. This fluid can build up around the eye, impeding your dog's ability to blink or open its eye normally.

### Diagnosis

Usually the veterinarian will make the diagnosis based on symptoms. He may also want to do a culture to see exactly what kind of organism has infected the eyes.

### Treatment

All cases of conjunctivitis should be treated at once. A culture and sensitivity test may be necessary to determine if bacteria are the cause, and if so, what medication should be used for treatment. Scrapings of the conjunctiva can be made and examined to test for various viral infections.

Eye drops or ointments are usually the drugs of choice. Eye drops are watery solutions that must be applied every few hours, while ointments last longer and are usually only applied two to three times per day.

If the cause is suspected to be allergy, then various medications are available containing anti-inflammatories, usually hydrocortisones. If the cause is an infection, then bactericidal or fungicidal ointments or solutions may be applied. In

severe cases, oral antibiotics are used in addition to the topical preparations. Most cases will respond to treatment, however, it may take one to two weeks to fully recover. In general, treatment is continued for several days after the eye regains its normal appearance.

Many eye ointments containing hydrocortisones and antibiotics are available and are frequently used when the exact cause of the problem is unknown. It is important however, not to use hydrocortisone-containing agents if a corneal ulcer is present. Hydrocortisone, although great at minimizing eye inflammation, may actually hinder the healing of or worsen an ulcerated cornea.

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