

Table 2**Common causes of conjunctivitis, typical features and treatment**

Cause	Typical features	Typical treatment
Bacterial	● Gritty, red eye ● Sticky yellow discharge	● Topical antibiotic course if severe (e.g. chloramphenicol 2 hourly for 2 days, then 4 hourly until 48 hours after resolution)
Viral	● Gritty, red eye ● Watery discharge ● A recent history of upper respiratory tract infection is common ● Pre-auricular lymphadenopathy is common	● Lubricating eye drops ● Cool compress ● Advice re hygiene precautions (e.g. frequent hand washing, avoid touching the eyes and sharing towels etc)
Chlamydial	● Subacute onset (2-3 weeks) ● Red eye with persistent mucopurulent discharge ● Almost always sexually transmitted in adults	● Conjunctival swab ● Oral antibiotics (e.g. azithromycin 1 g stat) after referral to the genitourinary team
Allergic	● Itchy, watery eye ● Bilateral ● History of atopy	● Lubricants ● Topical mast cell stabiliser ± topical/oral antihistamine