

## **A WORD ABOUT "PINK EYE"**

Conjunctivitis, or "pink eye" is an inflammation of the covering of the eye or eyelid. Infectious conjunctivitis is a contagious infection that is caused by bacteria or a virus and spreads easily from one person to another. If someone touches or wipes an infected child's face and then touches his/her own eyes, the infection can be transferred. It is most common among children. The treatment is usually antibiotic eye drops or ointment. If a virus causes the infection, a medication is not usually given, it generally goes away with time. When conjunctivitis is triggered by allergies, it is called allergic conjunctivitis and can affect anyone. It causes watery itchy eyes, and a red "bloodshot" appearance. **It is not contagious.** It is most frequently caused by cats or seasonal allergies. It is very common this time of year. Your doctor may order an antihistamine eye drop for inflammation and itching.

If your child has red, itchy, watery eyes, that improve then react again, it may be due to allergy. However, If your child has these symptoms along with drainage from the eye, crusty appearance along the eyelids, and discomfort anywhere in the eye it is probably infectious "pink eye" and he/she needs to be seen by a physician. **If your doctor orders medication, your child needs to be home a full 24 hours on medication before returning to school.**