Conjunctivitis and Blepharitis

Conjunctivitis is inflammation of the clear membrane that lines the eye. It is caused most commonly by infection with viruses or bacteria or an allergic reaction, though other causes exist, such as over exposure to sun, wind, smog, chorine, or contact lens solution. Pinkeye is a common name for conjunctivitis. Blepharitis is inflammation of the eyelid; most commonly, it is caused by a bacterial infection.

**Nutritional supplements that may be helpful:** Vitamin A deficiency has been reported in people with chronic conjunctivitis.1 It is unknown whether vitamin A supplementation can prevent conjunctivitis or help people who already have the condition.

**Are there any side effects or interactions?** Refer to the individual supplement for information about any side effects or interactions.

**Herbs that may be helpful:** A number of herbs are traditionally used to treat eye inflammations. To avoid infection, all preparations must be boiled and kept sterile before applying to the eyes. Calendula, eyebright, and chamomile are used to help reduce the swelling and redness when applied topically. Comfrey is a soothing herb used for conjunctivitis. Goldenseal or Oregon grape are antimicrobial and should be applied only if the cause is an infection.2 None of these herbs has been studied for use in
conjunctivitis or blepharitis, although they have a long history of use. When using herbal medicines in the eyes, it is important to work with a doctor of natural medicine.

**Are there any side effects or interactions?** Refer to the individual herb for information about any side effects or interactions.

**References:**


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