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Allergic conjunctivitis This can be seasonal (due to pollen or grasses) or year round (due to animal dander, dust, molds). Often allergies cause nasal and/or sinus congestion along with sneezing, ear congestion

Symptoms: Itching is the key symptom. Also the eyes will be red, tearing, swelling of the eyelids. Discharge is minimal and there is no pain.

Treatment: **Don't rub your eyes.** To reduce itch immediately think cold- put cool(not hot!) compresses(zip loc bag with ice chips and water) on eyelids instill & artificial tears(cooled in the refrigerator) into your eyes. If you need to use tears more than four times a day use Preservative Free tears(containers are disposable plastic vials- not bottles) For pollen allergies keep windows in house&car closed with AC on. Wash your hair and change clothes when you come into the house. Wash pillow case often(pollen from hair sticks to pillow case). **Don't' rub your eyes.** If your eyelids itch and are red OTC Hydrocortisone ointment 1% can be used on the lids twice a day.

Over the counter(OTC) eye drops such as Alaway or Naphcon A can give additional relief.

Oral antihistamine tablets will reduce nasal/sinus symptoms but may cause/aggravate a dry eye. For nasal/sinus symptoms prescription sprays reduce nasal symptoms without causing dry eye.

Prescription antihistamine eye drops. These are longer acting and more effective than the over counter drops. Pataday is a very effective antihistamine and can be used once a day. Another drop used is Optivar These drops can be used for years without side effects.

Prescription steroid eye drops. These are very effective but generally are not used for longer than several weeks. A common strategy is to begin with both steroid eye drops and an antihistamine drop and then slowly taper the steroid drops while continuing with the antihistamine drops.