

BSACI

Improving Allergy Care
through education, training and research

Allergic Conjunctivitis

Allergic conjunctivitis is inflammation or irritation of the conjunctiva, which is the thin 'skin' that covers the white part of the eyes and the inside of the eyelids. Symptoms include redness of the eyes, burning, eyelid swelling, and eye watering.

Seasonal allergic conjunctivitis is usually one of the symptoms of hay fever, especially in the spring and/or summertime, due to an allergy to tree and/or grass pollen. Allergy to house dust mite (HDM) can cause symptoms all year round and is known as 'Perennial conjunctivitis'. Other possible causes could be due to an allergy to moulds or domestic animals e.g., cats, dogs, horses, and rabbits.

The best way to manage allergic conjunctivitis is to avoid or minimise exposure to known allergens, e.g., by using a wet flannel as a cold compress or wearing glasses.

There are some medications that might be useful:

1. Antihistamine eye drops – e.g., Azelastine, antazoline or xylometazoline.
2. Mast cell stabiliser eye drops – e.g., Sodium cromoglycate drops.
3. Combination antihistamine + mast cell inhibitor e.g., Olopatadine eye drops.
4. Antihistamine tablets – 2nd Generation antihistamine tablets e.g., cetirizine or loratadine.
5. Steroid eye drops e.g., betamethasone eye drops.