



In this column, I would like to address the issues around Conjunctivitis. Conjunctiva is a membrane that lines the inside of the eyelids and the surface of the eyes. Cornea is the central black part and has no supply of blood. Inflammation of the conjunctiva is called conjunctivitis.

SYMPTOMS:

- The eye gets a sticky feeling, is red and sore.
- There may be a clear mucus or pus discharge which collects at the inner corner of the eye. It usually spreads to the other eye also.

CAUSES:

- One of the causes may be viral - usually associated with upper respiratory tract infections.
- You could be allergic to certain drugs or cosmetics which could lead to itching and swelling of the eyelids along with redness.
- Bacterial infection - may have stickiness and pus discharge.
- Dust, foreign body.
- Infections transferred via nose and hands, or as an airborne infection.

CURE

- You can use a cold compress treatment. Boil and cool plain water or rose petal infused wa-



ter, soak cotton or used tea bags and apply over eyes for five to ten minutes. Alternatively, you can place thin slices of potato or cucumber on closed eyelids for ten minutes. It soothes the eye and suppresses inflammation.

- Boil two tablespoons of water with a pinch of common salt/boric acid and a few small cotton swabs. Cool. With clean hands, use swab to clean the eye and pour the saline water in eye to wash. Repeat many times whenever discharge collects.
- Rose water or pure honey has antiseptic properties. A drop of either of these can be put in the eye till the discharge clears up. Severe infections need an antibiotic.
- For severe infections, you can use antibiotic eye drops after consulting with your doctor.
- If this is an allergic reaction, the eye may also require steroid drops but these must be given strictly under medical supervision.

PREVENTION

- Do not share handkerchiefs, tissues, washcloths or towels which could pass on the virus.
- Use a soft tissue to touch your eye.
- Avoid going into swimming pools.

Feel free to write in with comments or feedback to HealthTalk@citymasala.com.



The Parents' ChatRoom

By: Dr. Maulik Trivedi

Q. I have two children who are 2 and 5 years old. They are very naughty and keep me running around in circles all day. I am a full time mother and ask my husband to help me out in the evenings but he just wants to play with them and doesn't do anything to discipline them. They misbehave when my husband is home but he doesn't care. He feels that children are innocent and should be allowed to do anything they want. They even hit and bite other people! Sometimes I feel like hitting them because they just don't listen. I love my children very much and don't like myself for losing patience. My kids also seem to love my husband more because I am always yelling at them. I just need some support from my husband. What do I do?
Name withheld upon request.

A: Surprise, Surprise! Do you think that your children may be trying to be your teacher? But, just think about it - is it not possible that you and your husband are both right? Your difference of opinions puts you at odds with each other and leads to a less harmonious home. You are absolutely correct in wanting to unify your opinions to take a consistent stand as united parents.

Here are some ideas on how to do that. The main point to remember is that the way to approach a difference in opinion is by trying to bridge the reality of the two different viewpoints. If you overcome the frustration of this step, the rest, which involves merging your two view-points into a common reality that is acceptable to both of you, will come naturally.

For the parent, children come as clean slates and

their life experiences mold them. Usually in situations like yours, where the parents have two opposite views the children continue to 'split' the parents into all good or all bad. Home life becomes a constant game of power. As a result, the children do not see the purpose of rules and just focus their energy on how to get what they want. When parents can't agree on how to manage children's behaviors, children wind up getting mixed messages as the same behavior leads to a different consequence from each parent. This trains the child's mind to behave selectively. They do not learn good self-control.

Set up consequences that both of you agree on to address a particular problem behavior. When you see your child display the problem, give the same consequence. You will no longer be split up as a good and bad parent. You will shape your child's ability to respect laws of harmonious living as they grow up.

Q. My daughter is 13 years old and has a close friend whose parents are divorced. I like the mother very much but have a very strong aversion to the father - there is something not quite right with this man. My daughter and her friend have a sleepover together at least twice a month. So far, my daughter could go only if her friend was at her mother's house. Recently, her friend is spending more time at her father's and keeps asking my daughter over. I offer to have her friend over instead. My daughter doesn't understand my reasoning. I have tried to explain that I am not comfortable about her spending the night where there is no female adult around but

she gets frustrated with this reasoning. I have also talked about protecting her from potentially unsafe places but she thinks she has everything under control and doesn't understand my fears.
Shiela from Tampa, FL

A: The words 'potentially unsafe' need to be addressed more carefully. Either your suspicions are correct and you are protecting your child or you are merely exercising your stereotypes and preventing your child from a joyful experience. Here are some ways in which you can address this: speak to your daughter about what your fears are. Tell your daughter that you want to figure out why you are worried and you want to prevent harm. Ask her to clear your queries.

Get an idea of what interactions take place when the children are with this father. This will either validate or negate your fears. You should meet the father, ask specific questions, if you haven't already done so. This will either validate your 'gut feelings' or discard them as unnecessary worry. Have a mature discussion with your teenage daughter about what you hear in the news and ensure that she is aware of how to protect herself. Your answer lies in confronting the situation bravely and smartly and not by avoiding the issue because you are in 'fear'. Best of luck.

Dr. Trivedi is a Board-Certified Psychiatrist with a private office in Tampa. He treats children, adolescents and adults. Please visit www.MINDvantage.com for more information.

Send your questions to: theparentschatroom@citymasala.com.