

## **EPIDEMIC KERATOCONJUNCTIVITIS (EKC)**

Epidemic keratoconjunctivitis is an inflammation of the cornea and conjunctiva caused by an adenovirus. It is named epidemic for the epidemic way the infection spreads.

### **SYMPTOMS**

Sudden onset of irritated, red eyes. Discharge is watery. Photophobia with foreign body sensation is also noted. Vision changes could be mild (20/30) or severe with keratitis (20/100). Ocular symptoms usually calm down in two weeks.

### **TESTS**

The signs above can be seen by an eye doctor using a slit lamp. Signs and symptoms provide the majority of clues to make a diagnosis.

### **CAUSE**

It is caused by several adenoviruses.

### **TREATMENT**

Hygiene is very important. Hand washing is must. Supportive therapy is important, such as sunglasses, artificial tears, cool compresses. The use of steroid is controversial. Steroid is generally used if subepithelial infiltrates are greatly affecting visual acuity. The conjunctivitis may get worse before it gets better. The virus is shed in the tears. When subepithelial infiltrates appear, the patient is non- contagious. Bedding and towels need to be washed frequently. The patient should not share towels with others.

### **PROGNOSIS**

The patient will recover with time. Remember, the conjunctivitis will probably get worse before it gets better. There is no effective antiviral medication.

### **COMPLICATIONS**

Pseudomembrane may form and can be removed by an ophthalmologist.

### **PREVENTION**

Avoid close contact with persons suffering from EKC. Do not share bedding or towels with infected individuals. Practice good hygiene, wash your hands.