Season Three Introduction

Hi, welcome to season three of the Baby Manual podcast, The Holistic Mama's Handbook. This season we'll go through alternative and supportive care to help you take care of your little one when they're sick, but too young to take most medicines.

I'm your host, a pediatrician and mom, and the author of The Baby manual and The holistic Mama handbook, Dr. Carol Keim. Hello and welcome to this week's episode of the Baby Manual Podcast.

Today we're going to be talking all about the eyes and I'm going address two conditions that affect baby's eyes.

Blocked Tear Ducts in Babies

The first one is lacrimal duct stenosis, which is sometimes called a blocked tear duct, and that's for young babies in the first year of life. the other one is pink eye.

So let's get started! So lacrimal duct stenosis happens in some babies, they're just born with it. The lacrymal duct is that tiny dot in the corner of the eye on the bottom eyelid.

It's actually not the tear duct, the tearducts are above the eyelid even. and then they drain onto the top of the eye and water the eyes. And the lacrimal duct is what takes the tears out of eye, and drains it away, it drains to the back of nose.

So babies who are born with a tear duct that's too narrow, or stenosed, as they have lacrymal duct stenosis, they can get a buildup of discharge in their eyes, And it starts off kind of watery but can look a little bit red and sometimes looks like pink eye because it can get crusted and can even get a yellowish or thicker.

But the whites of the eyes tend to stay white. Now sometimes they do also get pink on top of it, so stay tuned for the second half of this and we'll talk about what to do for pink eyes.

So for lacrimal duct stenosis, there aren't any long-term effects of this. It typically goes away on its own before one year of age. And from a Western standpoint, what we start off recommending is just massaging the lacrymal duct with diaper changes, around three to five times a day at least.

But if you do it each time you change the diaper, it's easy to remember. So you'll just massage in the corner of the eye, below the eyes, where it meets the nasal bridge.

And massaging it, it doesn't hurt. It might help, but it hasn't been shown consistently in studies to be really that helpful because it will go away on its own anyway.

But it can help it to open up a little bit quicker. If they have buildup in the eye, you can wipe it clean with a washcloth. And if your baby makes it to a year of age and they still have lacrimal duct stenosis, then there is a surgery that can be done.

It's really not much of a surgery, it's more just a dilation of the duct itself. But your Baby will be put under anesthesia and then they use a thin, a very, very thin probe to go in there and open it up a little bit.

If the eyes do get infected on top of it, we would add on antibacterial eye drops for that, but typically we don't do any eye drop for lacrimal duct stenosis.

For acupuncture standpoint, there's actually a point near the lacrimal duct that can be stimulated with showny shin. Now remember, acupuncture in children doesn't use needles.

They use little blunt tools, sometimes laser pointers, sometime just a little bit of massage in that area, but they can stimulate that point that's near that lacrymal duct, and that has actually been shown in studies to have really good results.

So you can see a pediatric acu-puncturist for this. From a chiropractic standpoint You can go to a chiropractor that does craniosacral therapy, which is very gentle.

Remember chriopractic in babies doesn't involve twisting and popping. It's just very light, soft tissue work and very, very lightweight manipulation of the bones themselves.

So with cranio sacral, what you would see is it should be a pediatric chiropactor. They'd put their hands on the baby's skull and just lightly stroke around and near that area.

And sometimes the entire head itself. And that can help align the bones a little bit better and potentially help it to drain better. From a nutrition and supplement standpoint, there isn't really anything you can give your baby that would help that much.

But if you're breastfeeding, There are a couple things you could do. First, as a mom, you take either lecithin or extra omega-3s. They help with your ducts in your breasts, and it's thought to help all the duct in the body to kind of lubricate them and help things to go through a little bit easier.

So that might help, but again, not proven with studies very well. Or what you can do is you put breast milk in your baby's eyes. Breast milk is pH neutral, so it won't sting when it goes in.

And it has antibodies in it. So if there are any bacteria that are trying to grow in there, it can help to kill those bacteria. Plus, the breastmilk itself is sort of watery and can rinse out the eyes a little bit.

You can put the milk onto your babies eye and then just wipe it with a clean cloth afterwards. From a naturopathic standpoint, they can do fascial manipulation, which is again a very light touch that just moves the skin and the connective tissue, the fascia, and that can help a little with that.

From homeopathy standpoint.

Treatments for Blocked Tear Ducts

There are a few different homeopathic remedies that are recommended, but keep in mind that homeopathy from a Western standpoint has not been proven by Western science, and so we recommend with a little bit of caution with this.

When you're giving homepathic remedy to young babies like this, What you would do is you'd take the sugar pellet, put it into about a teaspoon of water, and then just give them a few drops of that water by mouth.

And the remedies that are recommended for lacrimal duct stenosis are Pulsatilla, MercSol, Apis Malefica, or Stanum Met. And from an aromatherapy standpoint, there really aren't any treatments for this.

You really shouldn't be putting any of the essential oils anywhere near your baby's eyes. Although some decongestants can help a little bit. So if you have a diffuser in the house, you can use something like eucalyptus or peppermint oil in a defuser.

And when there's any congestion in back of nose, it can prevent that duct from draining as well. that can potentially help to open it up a little bit.

Now all of these treatments are in the Holistic Mama's handbook and they're all written out in a nice easy and clear manner so you don't need to be taking notes during all this.

Now for pink eye, pink is sometimes caused by viruses and sometimes by bacteria. Viral infections are actually more common than bacterial infections. And with viral pink-eye, what you'll see is typically both of the eyes, the white parts of eyes get pink and irritated.

Your child may be rubbing their eyes. They might be tearing up a little more. and they'll probably wake up in the morning with a bit of crusting on their lashes.

With a bacterial pink eye, it tends to be on one side or start on side and then spread to the other side. And with a bacteria pink, eye it comes on a lot faster.

It's a little stronger. Their eyes are a redder and the crusting that they get with it, tends be really thick. Its filled with pus and their eyes, are often crusted all the way closed in the morning.

So it's lot more prominent when they have a Bacterial pink. With viral pink eye, it's self-limited and it goes away within one or two weeks, but sometimes children will actually get a bacterial infection on top of that because they're rubbing their eyes, because their eye are itchy.

So sometimes as a Western doctor, I will still prescribe antibiotic drops for viral-pink eyes just to prevent them from getting that super-infection in there.

But the true treatment from a Western standpoint for viral pink eye is just cool compresses to the eyes and trying to avoid rubbing and touching them.

Remember pink is very contagious, and that's because the viruses or bacteria that are in there, they can live anywhere on surfaces, but they're just very concentrated in that area.

And so when a child touches their eyes or when you clean them off as a caregiver, then you have the bacteria or viruses on your fingers and then those can get spread to other surfaces which other people can touch and if they touch their eyes they can catch it as well.

So when you're cleaning your child's eyes with pink eye make sure that you use that wet washcloth use a different side of the wash cloth or a difference area of it for the other side so that your not spreading infection from one side to the another and wash your hands with soap and water after you've done that.

For bacterial pink eye, there are lots of different antibiotic drops that can be prescribed, so you would have to see your doctor for that. But they work pretty quickly, typically within a couple of days.

And you'll put the eye drops in a few times a day until 24 hours after the symptoms are gone. So I tell parents the day that your child wakes up with clear eyes is your last day of treatment, and you still would give the eyedrops three or four times depending on how often they've been prescribed.

From an acupuncture standpoint, for viral pink eye, you would treat the underlying cause or imbalance in the body. So they can use acupuncture to help treat pink eyes itself.

But for bacterial pink-eye, there is not an Acupunctur treatment for that.

Understanding Pink Eye

From chiropractic standpoint, they don't really help with pink eye, but if it is a viral infection, chiropractic is thought to help overall wellness and homeostasis, keeping the body in balance.

So, it may be helpful to talk to your chirapractor about this, typically they wouldn't specifically treat the pink-eye. From a nutrition and supplement standpoint.

If it's a viral infection, you can use immune-boosting vitamins and herbs such as vitamin C, vitamin D, zinc,

echinacea, and elderberry. And these all help boost the immune system and they tend to be antiviral, so they can help the infection to go away quicker.

There aren't really any supplements from a nutritional standpoint that you would give for a bacterial pink eye. But keep in mind that bacteria feed off of sugar.

And so if your child eats a lot of the sugar, it may be recommended to cut back on that, at least while they're sick. Also, if they have any nasal congestion that's contributing to it and not allowing the eyes to drain very well, you may wanna cutback on cow's milk or dairy while their having the pink eye as well and that might help a little bit.

From a naturopathic standpoint, They would recommend breast milk in the eyes if you're still breastfeeding. Some naturopaths can make an herbal tincture that can be applied to the eye, but you need to be sure that it's very sterile because remember that the ice are very sensitive and anything that is potentially having any bacteria in there could actually make the pink eye worse.

They also may recommend wet socks, which is something that helps with fever in a naturopathic standpoint, and that's just putting wet cotton socks on your child's feet and then wool socks ontop of it.

And as the water evaporates out of those socks it's thought to pull the infection down and out off the body and help it to go away faster. From a homeopathic standpoint, there are homeopathy eye drops that you can buy over the counter.

And then there's also some oral ones that can give. Now children who are over four to six months of age and are eating solid foods are able to take those sugar pellets by mouth.

But younger children than that, you should again dissolve it in about a teaspoon of water and then just give them a few drops of that water by For the homeopathic remedies, you can use euphrasia, pulsatilla, and calceria sulf.

But keep in mind that if it's not helping or if they're getting any worse within 24 hours, You should go see a Western provider and get some antibiotic drops.

And from an aromatherapy standpoint, it's again not recommended to put any essential oils on or near the eyes. And so there's not really anything that will help topically.

But also if they are congested with their pink eye, you can use those decongestant oils in a diffuser in the room. So those are things like eucalyptus and peppermint oil.

Alright, I hope this helps you guys.

Treating Pink Eye and Eye Drop Tips

There are more things like this in the Holistic Mama's Handbook, which you can actually pre-order on Amazon if you're listening to this as it comes out, or if your hearing it later, it should be readily available right now.

You just search for Holistik Mama Handbooks on amazon and all of these are laid out for you in there and I talk about things, like dosing and how to apply things.

One thing I forgot to mention is the eye drop trick when you're putting eye drops into your baby's eyes and that's in the book as well. But the trick that I suggest to parents is that actually you don't need to open your child's eye to put eye-drops in.

You can let them lay down with their eyes closed, put a drop of the eyedrops in a corner of their eye near the nose, and then wait until they blink. So if it's a young baby, you can just hold their head still and wait for them to open their eyes, or older children do, you just ask them open the eyes for a second and they'll probably blink a couple times and then when they blink, the eye drops go right in.

With antibacterial eye drops, if you're not sure if the drops have gone in or not, it is okay to try a second or third time, you are not going to overdose them that way, and you just need to make sure that the drop really do get into the eyes.

Now, eye drop shouldn't sting your baby, so if they seem to be in pain after you put the eye-drops in, or if their crying more or they say that they hurt, that could actually be a sign of an allergy.

Remember that children can be allergic to any antibiotic and also things like herbs they can allergic too, any plants. So if you notice that your child is suffering from the eye drops, then stop and talk to your doctor and ask for a different prescription.

Next week, stay tuned, make sure you hit that subscribe button, next week we're going to be talking all about ears and ear infections. Remember, there's more information like this in the Holistic Mama's Handbook, also in my other book, The Baby Manual, which is available on Amazon as well, and If you go to the link that's in my show notes down below, you can get some supplements and vitamins at 10% off and there should be a link for that directly there and then also for all of these books and other resources as well.

I hope this has been helpful and have a wonderful day. Thank you for listening to the Baby Manual Podcast. Please hit that subscribe button below so you don't miss the new episodes as they come out.

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