

Contact Lens Care



To prevent eye infections while wearing contact lenses:

- Practice good hygiene
- Minimize contact with water
- Do not moisten lenses with saliva
- Remove lenses before going to sleep
- Use only commercially made sterile contact lens solution
- Rub and rinse lenses gently
- Be aware of the solution's expiration date
- Replace contact lenses and cases as recommended

Proper Maintenance and Use

Contact lenses are a popular option for corrective eyewear. For many people, this choice offers vision correction without the inconvenience of eyeglasses. The two main forms of contact lenses are rigid gas permeable lenses and soft lenses. There are several different types of soft contact lenses; these vary in the number of days they may be worn before replacement. An annual eye examination and a prescription from a licensed eye care professional are required to purchase corrective contact lenses. To maintain good vision and eye health, it is essential to understand how to properly care for and wear contact lenses.

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The Care Required Depends Upon the Type of Contact Lens



A contact lens floats on the cornea of the eye, moving as the eye moves to provide clear eyesight throughout the visual field. This is an important advantage not possible with eyeglasses. However, contact lenses are not for everyone; they require special care to keep the eyes healthy and prevent infections or corneal damage.

To avoid infection and eye damage, it is important to carefully follow the usage and cleaning instructions provided by the eye care professional and the manufacturer.

Types of Contact Lenses

Rigid gas permeable (RGP) contact lenses and soft contact lenses are the types most commonly used for vision correction. RGP lenses are sturdy and can last for years, although many people find them less comfortable than soft lenses. The wearing time for RGP lenses must be slowly built up to avoid corneal damage. RGP lenses must be cleaned daily with a concentrated cleaning solution to remove oil and protein deposits, and they should be soaked in a disinfecting storage solution when not in use. An RGP lens is inserted into the eye with a cushioning wetting solution that enhances wearing comfort.

Soft contact lenses, which are disposable, are a popular alternative to RGP lenses. They are more fragile and require different cleaning, disinfecting, and wetting methods than RGP lenses. There are many choices in soft contact lenses, with varying wearing periods and lifetimes. Daily disposable soft lenses are worn for 1 day and then discarded. Some soft lenses, designed for more extended wear, are cleaned daily and disinfected prior to being worn the next day. These lenses are approved for daily wear for up to 30 days, after which they must be replaced. Certain extended-wear contact lenses are approved for continuous wear; they may be worn day and night for up to 30 days, with at least one 24-hour break from contacts between periods of wear.

Good Practices for Maintaining Eye Health

There are several rules that all contact lens wearers should follow to keep their eyes in good health. First, buy contact lenses only through an eye care professional or from a store that requires a prescription.

Before contact lenses are handled, the hands should be washed with a nonmoisturizing soap and rinsed thoroughly. It is best to put in contact lenses before applying makeup, and to take them out before makeup is removed.

There are many contact lens solutions for cleaning, disinfecting, and wetting contact lenses, varying according to the type of lens and its cleaning and storage requirements. Wearers should always use the solutions recommended by their eye care professional. Solution should be used before the expiration date on the container; once opened, it should be discarded according to the directions on the bottle. Fresh solution should be used each time the contacts are cleaned, disinfected, and stored. Fresh solution should never be added to previously used solution in a storage case. When not in use, the contact lens storage case should be rinsed thoroughly with solution and allowed to air dry. The storage case should be replaced every 3 to 6 months.

Contact lenses should never be cleaned or inserted into the eye using tap water, distilled or bottled water, pond or lake water, or saliva; this can lead to serious infection and permanent eye damage, including blindness. Contacts should never be uncomfortable or cause symptoms such as redness, pain, itching, or tearing. If a contact lens is uncomfortable to wear, regardless of the symptoms, remove it immediately and contact an eye care professional.