

Are there any risks or side effects of contact lenses? (contd)

- corneal abrasions (scratches to the front surface of your eye)
- infections or corneal ulcers which can permanently damage your eyes or your vision.

Daily checks

Ask yourself each day when you put your lenses in:

- can I see as well as normal?
- do my lenses or eyes feel uncomfortable?
- do my eyes look red?

If your vision is not as good as normal, your eyes are uncomfortable, or your eyes are red then you should remove your lenses and speak to your optician as soon as possible.

Can my child wear contact lenses?

Whilst there is no minimum or maximum age for contact lenses, this question is best put to the optician that you intend to take your child to. They will take into consideration whether your child will be able to look after and handle their lenses and whether they are able to report problems reliably, and then can begin to discuss the times that contact lens wear might be appropriate – eg this may be for a particular sport to begin with.

If your child has an HES3 (voucher for glasses supplied by the Hospital Eye Service) this cannot be used towards the cost of contact lenses and they must be funded privately.

Any questions?

If you have any questions about your lenses or your suitability to wear lenses then speak to your community optician where you have your eyes examined.

Contact lenses



If you would like this leaflet in large print, braille, audio version or in another language, please contact the General Office on 01872 252690



What are contact lenses?

Contact lenses are thin discs of plastic which sit on the front surface of your eye. They are held in place by your natural tears and eyelids. They can be used to correct most common focusing problems. Your optician will be able to discuss contact lens options for the following:

- Myopia (short sightedness)
- Hypermetropia (long sightedness)
- Astigmatism (when different parts of the eye need a different prescription)
- Presbyopia (age related, gradual loss of ability to see near objects or print).

Your optician may also use lenses to help with medical conditions such as keratoconus (a distortion to the front surface of the eye).

When can contact lenses be worn?

The most commonly fitted contact lenses are daily disposable lenses. These are worn once and disposed of or recycled. They are easy to handle and the risk of infection is lower than with re-useable lenses. Re-useable lenses are generally suitable for 2 weeks or 1 month's wear and must be removed and cleaned after each use. There are some lenses that can be slept in for up to 30 days – these have a much higher risk of eye infection, and lenses should only be slept in on the advice of your optician.

All soft contact lenses and their packaging are recyclable – please consider dropping them back to your optician next time you are passing.

Are contact lenses suitable for all activities?

Contact lenses are a convenient way to be glasses free as they:

- don't steam up
- don't get rain on them
- can be used for most sports
- can sometimes give a better correction than glasses.

Is there anything contact lenses are not suitable for?

Most opticians will advise you not to take part in water sports or swimming in your contact lenses due to the risk of infection being much greater – this also includes the use of hot tubs and jacuzzis.

Opticians will advise contact lens patients to have a good pair of glasses as well as their contact lenses so that they can function without lenses should it ever be necessary.

How do I look after my contact lenses?

Contact lens care is simple and easy.

Do:

- always wash your hands with soap thoroughly, and dry fully before handling your lenses
- always follow your optician's advice regarding cleaning of your lenses and use the solutions advised by your optician as some solutions are specific to the lens type

- change your contact lens case regularly as advised by your optician – this should be roughly once a month
- let your optician know if you take any medications, or if your medications change. Some medications can have adverse effects on the eye or the lenses and you may need a different type of lens
- if you wear make-up, apply your make-up after your lenses and remove it after removing the lenses. If you use hand creams then use them after inserting your lenses. Replace your makeup at least 3 monthly to help prevent infection.
- keep your eyes shut if you use any hair sprays or make-up fixing spray.

Don't:

- use saliva, water or anything else not advised by your optician to clean or store your lenses in. This may cause infections.
- wear lenses for longer than your optician advises
- re-use lenses that are daily or single use lenses
- sleep, swim or shower in your lenses.

Are there any risks or side effects of contact lenses?

Occasional problems that may occur with contact lenses may include:

- dry eyes
- sore or itchy eyes (which can be caused by over wearing lenses)