



UPTOWN EYECARE & OPTICAL

CONTACT LENS WISDOM

Thousands of individuals enjoy improved vision, comfort, and clarity from wearing contact lenses without any adverse effect on eye health. However, contact lenses are classified as medical devices by the Federal Food and Drug Administration because they can cause serious eye health problems leading to permanent vision loss. Reading and following the instruction on this information sheet will help you continue to maintain good eye health while enjoying the benefits of contact lens wear.

“The Six Rules of Contact Lens Wear”

Rule 1: Your eyes should always **look good, feel good, and see good** while wearing your contacts. If not, something is wrong and must be investigated before continuing wear. If your eyes become red, irritated, painful, or have blur, take your contacts off. If your eyes feel and look good within fifteen minutes of removing your contacts, try your contacts again later. If still not comfortable, try a different pair. If you still have redness with pain or blurred vision, call our office for an emergency appointment. If the office is closed, the number for you to call our On Call Service will be on the office-answering message. It is also on our website.

Rule 2: Good hygienic routines are essential. Because you are putting a foreign object into the eye, wearing contacts increases the chance of a serious eye infection. Although most contact lens related eye infections respond to antibiotic treatment, some resist treatment and lead to permanent vision loss and scarring. Try to prevent contamination when wearing and handling your contacts. Then, remember to disinfect your contacts each time you wear them.

**Before handling your lenses, always wash your hands with a soap free of deodorant, perfume and oil. Liquid soaps are often too oily for contact lens wearers.

**Rinse and air-dry your contact lens case after each use. (No closer than 3 feet from the toilet.) Weekly disinfect your case by scrubbing with your contact lens disinfectant or boiling - don't put in the dishwasher, where it can become contaminated with food! Replace case at least every three months. Use completely new/fresh solutions each night—no “topping off”, or adding solution to the case.

Disinfect your lenses after each wear with solutions we recommend. **Remember - saline is not a disinfectant and your solution label must say “disinfects”. Even with “no rub” solutions, **rub the surfaces of the contacts** for a few seconds before storing in solution.

**If your contacts become contaminated while being worn (dropping on the counter, dirt in the eye, etc.), remove and disinfect. If that is impossible, take your lenses out immediately if your eyes become irritated and disinfect as soon as possible.

**Wearing contact lenses for water sports, swimming, or hot tubbing is NOT recommended. If you wear them for these activities, take your lenses off as soon as possible and put on a pair of fresh, disinfected contacts or glasses while you disinfect the contaminated contacts.

Rule 3: Use the solutions we recommend. Solution labels are confusing. To make sure your lenses are disinfected after each wear, use only the solutions we recommend. We recommend you always keep a spare bottle of each solution and buy more when you first open the spare. If you are having trouble finding solutions or have cost concerns, we may be able to switch you to a different system. Some solutions are not compatible and ruin your contacts if used after other solutions. The savings of buying generic solutions is quickly overshadowed by the costs of doctor appointments to fix problems the wrong solutions can cause.



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Rule 4: Accept that there will be times when you will not be able to wear your contacts. Many physical, personal, environmental and emotional factors can prevent comfortable or safe contact lens wear. A pair of back up glasses is essential to remove the temptation to wear your contacts when you shouldn't. The following factors are among those, which can limit your ability to wear contacts:

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| allergies | dust or chemicals in the air |
| hairspray or other aerosols | poor lens or personal hygiene |
| makeup; hand or face lotions | dry eyes |
| emotional stress | smoking or smoke in the air |
| excess protein or mucous in tears | eye infections or abrasions |
| windy, dry days or environments | general illness and certain medications |

****The longer you wear contacts, the greater your risk of developing complications.** A few patients can safely wear appropriate contact lens materials overnight, but extended (overnight) wear dramatically increases your risk of developing a serious eye infection. Tell the doctors if you want to wear contacts overnight, so your follow-up visits can be scheduled for the morning to look for problems related to overnight wear.

****Wearing contacts is not an endurance test; routinely take your contacts off before your eyes feel irritated.** Follow the wearing schedule recommended by the doctor. Most patients can wear contacts 12 hours a day, but for some patients only a couple of hours are comfortable.

Rule 5: Come in for check-ups when recommended by the doctor. Some contact lens induced problems can be easily corrected if caught before you have any awareness of a problem. Waiting until you have irritation or blur often means going without contacts for at several days or weeks. Make sure you don't run completely out of fresh contacts if you want to easily renew the prescription! **You must wear clean lenses to your yearly renewal appointment, so the doctor can examine your eyes immediately after you've worn the contacts for several hours to check for adverse eye health effects.** If your eyes are irritated from wearing old contacts, your prescription can't be renewed until your eyes heal.

Rule 6: Replace your contacts as recommended. Regardless of how well you clean, all contacts develop a deposit over time. Deposits prevent oxygen transmission and bacteria cling to deposits, so replacing soiled contacts reduces your chance of an eye infection. During your contact lens checks, the doctor determines when your lenses start to look soiled and compromise eye health. Disposable or frequent replacement lenses decrease your risk of developing complications when thrown away as recommended by the doctor.

IN SUMMARY:

To prevent problems, clean your hands and contact lens case, use solutions we recommend, and replace as recommended. If a problem develops, listen to your eyes: don't wear your contacts if your eyes suddenly develop pain, redness or blurred vision.

First time contact lens wearers: Your wearing schedule is:

___ soft lenses: 2-4 hours first day, then add 2-4 hours per day up to max of 8-12 hours per day

___ gas permeable lenses: 2-4 hours first day, then add 2 hours per day up to max of 12 hours per day

Name of my contact lenses: _____

My contacts are to be replaced every ___ day ___ weeks ___ month ___ year

My recommended solution is: OptiFree Pure Moist / Replenish Clear Care/Clear Care Plus PeroxiClear

Boston Original/Advance Boston Simplus Optimum by Lobob B+L Sensitive Saline

My recommended lubricating drops / Extra Cleaners are: _____

UPTOWN EYECARE AFTER HOURS EYE EMERGENCY: 1-833-513-4014



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What Every Contact Lens Wearer Needs To Know (But Is Afraid To Ask)

1. What you're doing: *You let tap water come into contact with your contact lenses.*

Why you should stop: Seems harmless enough, right? Wrong. That's because tap water isn't salty like tears are, so contact lenses tend to absorb the water and swell. The contact lens will then "hold" it, which is a problem because water -- even water safe to drink -- isn't sterile and contains microorganisms. If your lens swells, it changes how the lens fits on your eye and it will often make the lens tighten on the eye. This can then create microscopic breaks in your cornea that microorganisms can get into, potentially causing infection. That's why it's important not to shower or swim with your contact lenses in, she says (plus swimming in your contact lenses ups the chances of them coming out of your eye). In addition, you should never use water in place of solution for storing your contact lenses.

2. What you're doing: *Your contact lenses are bothering you but you don't have solution with you, so you use water or your own saliva as "emergency" solution to wash them before popping them back in your eye.*

Why you should stop: Two words: bad idea. For the same explanation above, exposing your contact lenses to water isn't smart, and your saliva is ridden with bacteria that belong in your mouth and *not* your eye. Putting contacts in your mouth is like putting them in a petri dish -- you just don't want to do that. If you do catch yourself in a situation where your contact lenses are bothering you but you don't have access to solution and a contact lens case, your best bet is to just throw them away. Another option is to use lubricating drops made for contact lens wearers (not the kinds to combat red eye) to try to relieve any discomfort. And of course, it's always wise to carry some emergency and a contact lens case with you at all times for moments like this.

3. What you're doing: *You re-use your solution.*

Why you should stop: Recycling solution is like begging for an eye infection. All the debris and bacteria that are in your eyes and are on your contact lenses, come off into the solution. So if you're re-using the same solution time and again, that means you're letting your contact lenses stew in a bacteria-ridden pool of liquid -- and then putting those same contacts right back into your eye. If you have any microscopic breaks in your cornea, those bacteria can then infect the cornea. Instead, take care to use fresh solution every single time you need to store your contacts. Or, if you hate dealing with solution and cases, consider daily disposable lenses.

4. What you're doing: *You've been using the same contact lens case for as long as you can remember.*

Why you should stop: First things first: Go to your bathroom and throw that old case away. Contact lens cases should only be used for three months tops before you replace with a new one.

5. What you're doing: *You wash your contact lens case with water, and then close it up before letting it dry completely.*

Why you should stop: The best way to keep your contact lens case clean is to wash it with *solution*, not water, since (as you know by now) water shouldn't come into contact with your contact lenses. Then wipe the case dry with a clean towel or let it air dry completely before putting the lids back on. It's better to just get a brand new, clean case than try to disinfect it yourself by running it through the dishwasher or boiling it.

6. What you're doing: *You use the off-brand solution.*

Why you should stop: When you opt for generic contact solution, you're playing roulette. That's because stores that sell their own brands actually purchase the solution from other companies, so you don't know what kind you're getting. Best advice is to talk to your doctor about the best solution for your own eyes, and then *stick* to that brand. It's not a good idea to switch solutions without having that discussion with your eye doctor, since you can develop allergies, sensitivities and dry eye by switching.

7. What you're doing: *You have a prescription for two-week lenses, but only wear contacts once a week for flag football games -- so you use the same lenses once a week for 14 weeks.*

Why you should stop: Sorry, penny-pinchers: If contacts are approved to be used for 14 days, it's two weeks from the time you open that lens package, it's *not* 14 days of wear. After that time period is when the lens starts to break down; the surface starts to break down and take on your protein, [and] mucus and bacteria that normally hangs out with us on our eyelids can lead to infection.



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8. What you're doing: You're using contact lenses you got from your eye doctor five years ago.

Why you should stop: Maybe you took a few years' break from contacts, or maybe you're just really bad about throwing away your monthlies after just a month (thereby creating a surplus of yet-to-be-used lenses). But any way you look at it, you shouldn't use contact lenses that are several years old. For starters, the prescription might just not be right anymore. But another thing to consider is that the solution the lenses are stored in has an expiration date. So the lens, when the solution expires, can cause infection and become very uncomfortable because of the pH [level] change. On that note, solution you buy at a store *also* goes bad, so if you're one of those people who stocks up on everyday-use items, make sure to check those expiration dates, too. Solution can over time break down, especially if exposed to sun or heat, which can be bad considering its two main functions are to not bring infectious material into your eye and to prevent infection.

9. What you're doing: Your vision is just a little blurry, or your eyes hurt just a little bit, but you wear your contact lenses anyway.

Why you should stop: Make this your mantra: When in doubt, take them out. If your contact lenses are causing you any discomfort, or your eyes look just the slightest bit red, it's better to listen to your body than suffer through the discomfort and potentially develop an infection. You should make sure your eyes look good, feel good and see good. By looking good, I mean your eyes should look clear and white. Your eyes should not look red or irritated. And by see good, I mean you can see well and clearly ... If you're not seeing well, that's a sign that there's a problem. And then your eyes should feel good, with no physical pain or discomfort. The first line of defense should be to apply lubricating drops made for contact lens wearers. But if that isn't enough, just take the lenses out. Inspect the lens, make sure it's not torn or cut. If it looks like Cookie Monster took a bite out of it, don't use it. You can get a scratched cornea, called a corneal abrasion ... You can always replace your contact lenses, but you can never replace your eyes.

10. What you're doing: You put your contact lenses in after putting your makeup on.

Why you should stop: Believe it or not, there is a correct order of operations for people who wear both makeup and contacts. To avoid getting makeup on your contact lenses, it's recommended to put contact lenses in your eyes before applying makeup, and then taking them *out* before removing eye makeup. On that same note, she also advises against putting creams or lotions on your hands before handling. Your hands should be clean; put your lenses in first before you handle any products.

11. What you're doing: You use waterproof makeup.

Why you should stop: Contact lens wearers should *not* use waterproof makeup because if the makeup gets on the lens, it will bind to it. And because waterproof makeup requires an oil-based remover, it will grease up the eyes and the lenses.

12. What you're doing: You wear your dailies for longer than a day, your monthlies for longer than a month, etc.

Why you should stop: Your contact lenses are made of plastic, but they actually have pores to help keep them moist in your eyes. However, these pores can then get dirty and trap debris and dirt in the lens. If you use your contact lenses for longer than recommended, you're setting yourself up for trouble, including eye irritation, dry eye, an infection or overall discomfort.

13. What you're doing: You sleep in your contact lenses.

Why you should stop: It's sort of like sleeping with a plastic bag over your head. That's because sleeping with contacts in your eyes severely limits oxygen transmission. When you are awake, your cornea receives oxygen from the air and from your tears. But when you're asleep, the cornea receives less nourishment, lubrication and oxygen because your eyes are closed and you are not blinking. Therefore, when you put a piece of plastic -- i.e., your contact lens -- over the cornea overnight, you are further depriving your cornea of oxygen. This can lead to your contact lens tightening in your eye, causing microscopic rips to the cornea -- and if there's a microorganism also in your eye, that could also lead to infection. Now, some contact lenses *are* approved by the Food and Administration for overnight and extended wear. If you're dead-set on being able to sleep in your contact lenses, talk to your doctor about getting a prescription for one of these types of lenses.