



CONTACT LENS
INSTITUTE OF
NEVADA

SCLERAL CONTACT LENSES : FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Scleral Lens Basic Questions:

What are scleral contact lenses?

Scleral contact lenses are specialized contact lenses made out of gas permeable material. This material helps to create a smooth surface, which can greatly improve visual quality (for patients suffering from keratoconus, corneal scarring, Post RK or LASIK surgery, and many other eye conditions) or help protect the ocular surface (for patients suffering from dry eye, graft-vs-host-disease, Sjogren's syndrome, Stevens-Johnson, and other debilitating eye issues). These highly customized lenses are unique to each patient's eye.

How are scleral contact lenses different from a regular contact lens?

Scleral lenses are extremely customized to each patient's eye. The fitting process is much more complex and the equipment necessary to fit this lens is much different than a regular contact lens. There is also behind the scenes work involved in which the doctors and the laboratory work together to design, fabricate, and adjust your scleral lenses throughout the fitting process.

Why do I need a scleral lens?

There are many different eye conditions that may warrant a scleral lens including, but not limited to: keratoconus, astigmatism, high myopia, high hyperopia, corneal scarring, post refractive surgery (LASIK, PRK, RK, etc) problems, corneal ectasias, irregular corneal surface, extreme dry eye, non-resolving epithelial defects, graft-vs-host disease, Sjogrens syndrome, Stevens-Johnson, eyelid malformations or anatomy issues, trauma to the eye, iris defects, and other ocular surface diseases. If you were referred to our office by another doctor, it is very likely you have one of these conditions or similar which prevents you from being successful in other modalities such as glasses and soft contact lenses.

How long do scleral lenses last?

Most scleral lenses will last 1-3 years. This depends on a variety of factors including how well you take care of the lenses and if the shape of your eye or prescription change.

How do you take care of scleral lenses?

Scleral lenses should be removed every night, cleaned, and undergo a disinfection process overnight. There are many different scleral lens care systems, and we will recommend one based on your specific situation.

Will I be able to insert and remove my scleral lenses?

While scleral lenses can seem intimidating due to their size, most patients (98%) are able to effectively insert and remove their lenses. You will have a training visit at our clinic and a variety of devices can be trialed to help you properly insert and remove your lenses. While a majority of patients are successful, there is always a chance that you will not be able to insert or remove the lenses. There is no way to predict who will and won't be successful.

What happens if I break my scleral lens?

If your lens breaks, chips or becomes damaged within the first 90 days of your fitting, you can bring back the damaged lens or any remaining pieces and we will issue a new lens at no charge. Please keep in mind that you must bring in the lens or the pieces in order for the lab to issue a credit.

What happens if I lose my scleral lens?

If you lose your scleral lens, you will be responsible for the fee to pay for a new lens.

Can't I just get LASIK instead of scleral lenses?

Most patients that require scleral lenses have medical eye conditions or complicated prescriptions that cannot be corrected with refractive surgery such as LASIK. In fact, having a surgical procedure may worsen your vision or eye condition permanently.

Common Financial Questions:

Why are scleral lenses so expensive?

Scleral contact lenses are fit by trained eye care professionals who are proficient in this type of lens. Many doctors must complete a cornea/contact lens residency or other extensive training to be able to effectively fit and manage scleral lens patients. There is also a significant amount of equipment that is necessary to fit your eyes successfully into scleral lenses. After your diagnostic fitting in the office, the doctor must then analyze the information and consult with the laboratory to design and fabricate your unique scleral lens. The amount of cost and time involved with scleral lenses leads to a higher service and material fee compared to any other contact lens type.

Is there insurance on scleral lenses?

No laboratory currently offers scleral lens insurance. As an alternative, you can contact your homeowner's insurance company and add the scleral lenses on, usually for a small fee. This would fall into the category of personal property such as household furniture, jewelry, etc. If you lose your scleral lens, you would contact the insurance company directly for reimbursement. Many of our patients have used their homeowner's insurance for scleral lens coverage with success.

Do I have to pay the same fee all over again when I come in next year for my next scleral lens visit?

If your scleral lenses are performing well for you, we will see you in 1 year after the original scleral lenses are finalized. At that visit, we will assess the scleral lenses for chips, scratches, warpage, and other defects. We will also evaluate the lens fit, prescription, and determine if any changes to the lens are necessary. If no changes are needed, you will only be charged a scleral lens evaluation fee of \$350 and we will schedule you for another year. If changes need to be made, the doctor will review the cost of the lenses and the recommended changes. In most cases, the cost is significantly less than your very first visit with us due to the fact that the laboratory has your eye information in their software and changes can be made quite easily with less fees.

What happens if scleral lenses do not work for me?

While our success rate is very high (over 90%), there is always a chance that scleral lenses will not work for you. This could be due to a variety of reasons, none of which can be predicted beforehand. In the event that you do not succeed with scleral lenses, you will be refunded a portion of your program fee. Please see your specific contract for details.

Why is there only a 90 day warranty on my scleral fitting?

The warranty is dictated by the laboratory that fabricates your scleral lenses. Returns and exchanges are available for 90 days, but beyond this point, the laboratory will not refund or credit any money to your lens account. We are bound by the rules and regulations of each laboratory.

Can I submit an out of network claim to my medical or vision insurance?

Yes, while we do not accept insurance, we will provide you with any necessary documents needed so that you may submit a claim to your insurance company. Reimbursement varies drastically and depends on your insurance company, your out of network benefits, your deductible, and your specific diagnosis.

Other common questions:

Will the Contact Lens Institute replace my regular eye doctor?

No, the Contact Lens Institute is responsible for fitting and management of the contact portion of your exam only. You will still need to see your normal optometrists and ophthalmologists as directed for all comprehensive eye care, dilated fundus exams, glasses, and any other eye issues.

Can I use eye drops with scleral lenses?

Yes, you can use certain eye drops with scleral lenses. If you are using medicated eye drops, you will still continue to use them as directed. For best results, apply your eye drops, then wait 10 minutes, and then apply your scleral lens.

If you use eye drops at night, remove your scleral lens first, then apply your eye drops. This will maximize the absorption of the eye drop. If you are using eye drops during scleral lens wear, a preservative free option such as Systane preservative free, refresh optive, iVizia, oasis preservative free tears will be recommended to you.

Will I be able to see far and near with scleral lenses?

If you are over 40 years of age or have an eye condition that disrupts your near vision, your near vision may be affected with scleral lenses. Typically, we fit your scleral lenses for maximum distance clarity. This may result in the need for glasses to see intermediate and up close. Some patients may be a good candidate for a scleral multifocal or monovision, which can improve your up close vision and reduce your need for reading glasses.

How many visits will it take to finalize my scleral lens prescription?

A typical scleral lens program consists of the following:

- An initial consultation where special measurements are taken of your eyes, and a diagnostic scleral lens fitting to determine your best possible visual acuity
- A dispense visit where we insert the scleral lenses onto your eye and evaluate your vision and the fit of the lens. Changes to the lenses may be needed and adjustments will be made.
- A training session to teach you how to successfully insert, remove and care for your scleral lenses
- A 1-2 week follow up to check the fit and vision of your scleral lenses. Changes to the lenses may be needed and adjustments will be made.
- Another 1-2 week follow up to check the fit and vision of your scleral lenses or dispense any new lenses if changes were made.
- Other follow up visits and dispense visits may follow if changes are needed to further improve your fit and vision.

Most patients require the consultation, fitting, dispense, training, and 2-3 follow-up visits. Depending on your specific case, you may need more or less visits. Please remember scleral lenses are a process and it takes a tremendous amount of time to design an accurate and healthy lens.

Why did scleral lenses not work for me in the past or with another eye doctor?

There are many different brands of scleral lenses on the market and also different fitting techniques from each specific doctor. If you did not do well with scleral lenses in the past, it could be that you need a more customized option. Many of our patients have highly complex eye issues which require a custom fit scleral lens using specialized 3D technology. Even if you did not succeed with scleral lenses in the past, it may be worth exploring some of the newer technologies available to improve your success rate.

Why did I need to come in every year?

Scleral lenses are considered medical devices. It is important that you see your scleral lens practitioner every year to evaluate the overall fit of your scleral lens as well as the health of your eye. Even if your scleral lens is providing good comfort and vision, there may be microscopic issues leading to a slow decrease in eye health. It is important to address these issues right away and make adjustments to your scleral lens to prevent long term damage to your eye.



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No primary care. No
optical. Total dedication to
custom contact lenses.

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