

SAFE CONTACT LENS WEAR

The information in this brochure is intended to be a helpful guide to wearers of all types of contact lenses. Whether you wear soft, RGP (Rigid Gas Permeable), hard, disposable, extended-wear or daily-wear lenses, most of this information will apply to you.

KNOW YOUR ROUTINE

Care regimen awareness

- Different solutions cannot always be used together and not all solutions are safe for use with all lenses. [Use only the lens care solutions recommended by your optometrist, and do not change brands without consulting your optometrist.
- Follow directions in the package inserts for the use of contact lens solutions.
- There are three essential steps in contact lens care
 - Cleaning
 - Rinsing
 - Disinfecting
- Every time contact lenses are removed, they must be cleaned, rinsed, and disinfected before wearing again. Some solutions are designed to perform more than one of these functions.
- Always remove, clean, rinse, enzyme, and disinfect your lenses according to the schedule prescribed by your optometrist.
- The use of an enzyme or any cleaning solution does not substitute for disinfection
- Lenses stored longer than 12 hours may require cleaning, rinsing and disinfecting again before use. Consult the package literature or your optometrist for specific instructions.

KNOWLEDGE IS SAFETY

Recommendations for safe contact lens wear

- Never wear lenses longer than prescribed. Do not wear daily wear lenses while sleeping.
- Do not wear your lenses overnight unless recommended by your optometrist. Overnight wear of contact lenses increases the risk of complications.
- Always wash, rinse, and dry your hands before handling lenses.
- Do not use saliva to wet your lenses. Do not put lenses in your mouth.
- Use only approved contact lens solutions for lubricating or wetting your lenses.
- Always use fresh solutions in your lens case when disinfecting your lenses.
- Ask your optometrist about water activities and other sports. Schedule and keep follow-up appointments with your optometrist.
- Never use non-sterile home-prepared saline. The use of home-prepared saline with contact lenses has been associated with serious infections.
- Contact lens cases can be a source of bacteria and other micro-organism growth. Lens cases should be cleaned, rinsed, and allowed to air dry each time the lenses are removed. Replace the lens case frequently.
- If your eyes become red, irritated, painful or if your vision worsens while wearing lenses, immediately remove the lenses and consult an optometrist.
- Do not get lotions, creams, or sprays in your eyes or on your lenses. It is best to insert lenses before applying make-up and remove them before removing make-up. Water-base cosmetics are less likely to damage lenses than oil-base products.
- You should have eye examinations every six to 12 months or as recommended by your optometrist.
- Contact lenses wear out with time and should be replaced regularly.

- Disposable and frequent or planned replacement lenses should be thrown away after the recommended wearing period prescribed by your optometrist.

KNOW YOUR PRODUCTS

Lens care product awareness

- Cleaning solutions remove dirt, mucus and debris that get on the lens during wear.
- Disinfecting solutions kill bacteria and other germs on the lenses. Disinfection is necessary to help prevent serious eye infections.
- Rinsing solutions remove other solutions from the lenses. They also prepare the lenses for wear.
- Enzyme solutions remove protein and other deposits that accumulate on the lenses over time.
- Rewetting solutions are used to wet (lubricate) the lenses while you are wearing them, to make them more comfortable.
- Never use unpreserved saline from a bulk (for example, 500 ml) multi-use plastic container.
- If preserved saline cannot be used then purchase either unit-dose unpreserved saline or aerosol.
- Some solutions may have more than one function, which will be indicated on the label. Read the label on the solution bottle.
- Keep solution containers tightly closed and upright in a clean, dry, cool place when not in use.
- Solutions may become contaminated after opening.
- Throw away opened solutions as recommended. Do not use any solutions after their expiration date. Remember the expiry date refers to the unopened container.
- Pay scrupulous attention to hygiene when handling the bottle tip and lid. Never touch the tip of the container with any other surface including fingers, and always handle the bottle lid with dry hands.

Your optometrist is registered and qualified to:

- examine your eyes for vision disorders
- detect and diagnose signs of eye disease
- prescribe, supply and repair spectacles
- detect and diagnose signs of health disorders involving the eyes
- prescribe and supply contact lenses
- analyse and treat eye co-ordination disorders
- prescribe other specialised optical aids
- contribute to the care of the partially sighted
- advise on lighting

Optometrists also advise on:

- sports vision
- visually related learning disabilities
- eye safety requirements for home and industry

If an eye disease or general health disorder is detected, your optometrist will refer you to an ophthalmologist general medical practitioner.

Medical insurance cover

Optometric consultations qualify for Medicare rebates

Private health insurance funds provide benefits for spectacles and contact lenses

Ask your optometrist for these related brochures

- Contact lenses

- Contact lens fees explained

This brochure is produced by the Australian Optometrical Association
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