



HEALTHY VISION & CONTACT LENSES

Soft contact lenses prescribed by licensed Eye Care Professionals are worn safely and comfortably by millions of people worldwide, and have a long history of providing wearers with a safe and effective form of vision correction. But, while contact lenses provide many vision benefits, they are not risk-free if you don't follow instructions about safe wear and care. This guide is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Your Eye Care Professional can help you better understand how to get the full benefits of your contact lenses and reduce your chances of developing problems that could affect your vision and the health of your eyes.



A contact lens is a medical device that requires a prescription.

A contact lens is a medical device and can be worn to correct vision, as well as for cosmetic or therapeutic reasons. In Canada, all contact lenses, even purely cosmetic ones, require a prescription. They must be properly fitted by an Eye Care Professional, such as an optometrist, ophthalmologist, or specially licensed optician.

An eye examination is needed to determine an individual's suitability for contact lenses. This typically includes a refraction to determine the proper power of the lens and an assessment of the health of the eye.

Prescriptions for contact lenses and glasses may be similar, but are not interchangeable.

Contact lens prescriptions generally expire on a yearly basis, unless otherwise determined by your Eye Care Professional. This is to ensure that your eyes are still healthy enough to support contact lens wear and that your current lenses are still appropriate for you.

Seeing your Eye Care Professional regularly for a comprehensive eye exam will not only assess your vision and need for updated prescriptions, but it may also help identify and lead to a diagnosis of other health concerns such as hypertension and diabetes.



Choosing the Right Contact Lens for You

Today, there are many contact lens choices available to correct vision conditions such as nearsightedness, farsightedness, astigmatism, and presbyopia.

Among the more popular options:

- **Daily Disposable Contact Lenses**
The healthiest contact lens option available; designed to be worn for one day and removed prior to sleeping. Convenient, because there is no need to clean or store the lenses.
- **Frequent Replacement**
Most commonly prescribed to be disposed of on a two-week or four-week basis. These lenses are taken out every night and should be replaced as directed by your Eye Care Professional. Some frequent replacement lenses are designed for continuous overnight wear. It is important that people who wish to keep their contact lenses in while sleeping first talk to their Eye Care Professional to determine if overnight wear of contact lenses is appropriate for them and to be properly fitted with the right type of contact lens.

- **Cosmetic Contact Lenses (a/k/a decorative contact lenses)**
Designed to change the appearance of the eye. These lenses may also correct refractive error. In some parts of the world, circle contact lenses, which give the appearance of a bigger, wider iris, are popular.
 - » **You should not purchase or wear cosmetic lenses without a contact lens examination by an Eye Care Professional prior to first use, and a prescription.** Buying contact lenses without a prescription can pose serious risk to your sight or eye health. Contact lenses require precise fitting and careful follow-up care from a trained Eye Care Professional. By buying and wearing contact lenses without medical guidance and a valid prescription, you may put yourself at risk for serious, even blinding eye infections.

Your Eye Care Professional will work with you to determine the appropriate lens, replacement frequency, and wearing modality that best suits your lifestyle needs.



DO's and DON'Ts for Handling and Wearing Your Contact Lenses

It is essential that you learn and practice good hygiene when handling contact lenses, and follow your Eye Care Professional's instructions for contact lens wearing and replacement schedules, lens care, and disinfecting routines.

Here are some DO's and DON'Ts for handling and wearing your contact lenses:

When handling your contact lenses:

DO wash and rinse your hands thoroughly with a mild soap, rinse completely, and dry with a lint-free towel before handling your lenses. Avoid soaps containing cold cream, lotion, or oily cosmetics before handling your lenses.

DO NOT touch the lens with your fingernails and never use tweezers or other tools to remove lenses from the lens container unless specifically indicated for that use.

DO inspect your lens before putting it in your eye. Examine it to be sure that it is moist, clean, clear and free of any nicks or tears. **DO NOT** use a lens if it is damaged or if the sterile blister package it comes in is opened or damaged.

[Continues>>](#)

DO's and DON'Ts for Handling and Wearing Your Contact Lenses (cont'd)

When wearing your contact lenses:

DO

remove your lenses immediately if you experience eye discomfort, excessive tearing, vision changes, and redness of the eye or other problems and promptly contact your Eye Care Professional.

DO NOT

wear your lenses beyond the amount of time recommended by your Eye Care Professional. When you discard your lenses and replace them with a fresh, sterile pair, you lessen the risk of eye infections or other potential problems.

DO NOT

expose contact lenses to any water (i.e., tap, bottled, distilled, lake or ocean water) while wearing them. Remove contact lenses before any activity involving contact with water, including showering, using a hot tub, swimming or other water sports. Exposing contact lenses to water in these situations may increase the risk of severe eye infection that could lead to vision loss or blindness. If your contacts unexpectedly come into contact with water, such as an unplanned swimming experience, discard them afterwards and replace them with a fresh pair.

DO NOT

wear someone else's contact lenses.



Contact Lens Solutions and Lens Cases

For continued safe and comfortable contact lens wear, reusable lenses must be cleaned and disinfected before you put them back on your eyes, or you should throw them away and replace them with a fresh pair of lenses.

Infections in contact lens wearers are often found among individuals who improperly store, handle, or disinfect their lenses, swim while wearing lenses, or come in contact with any water. That is why proper use and care of your contact lenses and lens care products, including lens cases, are essential for the safe use of these products.

To reduce the risk of contact lens-related infection, here are some steps you should follow:

- » Always use fresh lens care products and lenses before the expiration dates. **Never** re-use old solution. Contact lens solution must be changed according to the manufacturer's recommendations, even if the lenses are not used daily.
- » Always remove, clean, and disinfect your lenses according to the schedule prescribed by your eye doctor.
- » **Never** use saline solution and rewetting drops to disinfect lenses. Neither solution is an effective or approved disinfectant.
- » Use only solutions recommended by your Eye Care Professional and always follow the directions in the package inserts. Do not transfer contact lens solution from its original container to anything other than storage cases.
- » Do not use saliva or anything other than the recommended solutions for lubricating or wetting lenses. Do not put your lenses in your mouth.
- » **Never** rinse your lenses in water from the tap. Tap water contains many impurities that can contaminate or damage your lenses and may lead to serious eye infections and loss of vision.
- » Bacteria can grow in contact lens cases, so it is important to properly use, clean and replace your case, as well as your lenses. After removing your lenses from the contact lens storage case, empty it of all solution, and clean the case by rubbing and rinsing with solution(s) recommended by your Eye Care Professional. When finished, wipe the case with a clean, lint-free tissue to remove any excess solution and allow the lens case to air dry with both the case and cap(s) face down.
- » Seek immediate professional care if your eyes become red, irritated or if vision changes.

Resources

Talk to your Eye Care Professional about any questions or concerns you have about proper wear and care of your contact lenses. There are other sources of information you can access for additional information. Here are a few:

- The ACUMINDER® Tool, open to all contact lens wearers, sends an automatic reminder via e-mail when to change contact lenses, when to buy new contacts, and when to schedule an eye exam. Registration is free and open to all contact lens wearers at www.acuminder.ca. The ACUMINDER® Tool is also compatible with virtually all mobile applications.
- Most contact lens manufacturers provide information through Patient Instruction Guides, via their websites. The types and information will vary by company.
- The Canadian Association of Optometrists offers information on contact lenses, including "wear and care tips" at <http://opto.ca/openyoureyes/your-eye-health/what-is-an-eye-exam/contact-lense/>
- Health Canada provides important contact lens information on minimizing risk at <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/iyh-vsv/med/lenses-lentilles-eng.php>
- General information about contact lenses can be found at <http://www.eyesite.ca/english/public-information/eye-conditions/contact-lenses.htm>, the information service of the Canadian Ophthalmological Society.

Important Information for Contact Lens Wearers

I wear _____ Contact Lenses
(insert brand name of lens)

For good eye health, these lenses should be replaced with a fresh pair of lenses (circle one)

Daily Weekly (7 days) Every Two-Weeks (14 days)
Monthly (30 days) Other

Rub, rinse, disinfect, clean and store your contact lenses in

_____ (insert brand name of contact lens solution)

Remember to rinse your lens case daily with fresh solution. Empty the case completely and then let it air dry with the case face down and cap off. NEVER re-use solution. NEVER use water on your lenses.

Contact Lens Case:

Replace with new lens case on _____ (insert date)

Remember to properly use, clean and replace your case at least once every three months

Seek immediate professional care if your eyes become red, irritated or if vision changes