

Healthy Vision and Contact Lenses

Safe contact lenses use provides an effective form of vision correction. Contact lenses prescribed by a licensed doctor of optometry 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.



While contact lenses provide many vision benefits, they are not risk-free. A doctor of optometry helps patients better understand how to get the full benefits of contact lenses and reduce the chances of developing problems.

Protect eye and vision health with proper hygiene

Contact lens-related eye infections and other injuries can lead to long-lasting damage but often are preventable. Clean and safe handling of contact lenses is one of the easiest and most important measures patients can take to protect their vision. Hygiene is the most critical aspect of successful long-term contact lens wear.

Many common care mistakes, including failing to clean and store lenses as directed by a doctor of optometry and sleeping while wearing contacts, can increase the chance of getting bacteria in the eyes and causing infection. Serious eye infections can lead to blindness and affect up to one out of every 500 contact lens users per year, and even minor infections can be painful and disrupt day-to-day life.

A contact lens is a medical device that requires a prescription

All contact lenses, even purely cosmetic ones, are considered medical devices and require a prescription. If contact lenses are right for you, your doctor of optometry will provide you with the lenses, lens care kits, individual instructions for wear and care and follow-up visits over a specified time. The initial visit and examination can take an hour or longer.

Contact lens prescriptions generally expire on a yearly basis, unless otherwise determined by a doctor of optometry. Prescriptions for contact lenses and glasses may be similar but are not interchangeable. Also, different contact lenses often are made from different materials and in different sizes, some of which can be comfortable and healthy for you to wear, while others can lead to discomfort and even eye health problems. A prescription for contact lenses, therefore, involves more than simply knowing the optical power that corrects for nearsightedness, farsightedness, or astigmatism.

Contact an [**AOA-member doctor of optometry**](#) with questions about proper contact lens use and for any other eye health concerns.

Source:

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