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My Eyes: Soft Contact Lens Use

SOFT LENSES

Soft contact lenses are made of unique bio-compatible plastic which absorbs water. Most contact lenses are now made of a blend of plastic and silicone which enables them to allow high amounts of oxygen to absorb through the lens material and reach the surface of the eye, allowing the cells to stay healthy and breathe. Soft contact lenses are fairly easy to adjust to and will be comfortable to wear shortly after initial insertion.

Ongoing comfort is dependent on correct lens care habits. Soft Custom made contact lenses will usually last for between twelve months and two years per pair with careful care. Below are some tips for the successful handling and wearing of soft lenses.

HANDLING YOUR CONTACT LENSES

Always ensure your hands are washed before touching your contact lenses. Choose a fragrance-free and moisturizer-free soap and, if possible, ensure it is antibacterial. Dry your hands thoroughly with a towel after washing your hands. To prevent lint from fluffy towels sticking to your fingers and in turn your contact lenses, perhaps dry your hands using a paper towel or a clean tea towel instead. Washing your hands prevents dirt, oils or bacteria being transferred from your finger to the contact lens and subsequently into your eye.

OPENING THE BLISTER PACKET

Remove an individual blister packet from the box of contact lenses and peel back the foil. Use the tip of your index finger to remove the lens from the container.

Try if you can not to touch the inside of the contact lens with your finger. The inside of the lens touches your eye's surface and we want it to remain free of any contaminants that may still linger on your fingertip, even after handwashing.



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INSERTION OF LENSES

Place the lens on the index finger of your right hand if you are right handed (alternately place the lens on the index finger of your left hand if you are left handed). Inspect the lens on your finger to ensure that it is not inside out and that no foreign matter (like tissue lint) is on the lens. If a lens is inside out, the lens shape will have fluted rather than curved edges and will resemble a 'flan' rather than a 'bowl' shape.

If the lens is inserted inside out, vision will be relatively unchanged but the lens will be uncomfortable and not settle. In that case, remove the lens, rinse with multi-purpose solution and reinsert the correct way. There are many methods of inserting a contact lens and every wearer will find a method that feels comfortable to them.

The recommended method involves you looking at your eye directly in the mirror. With your non-dominant hand (i.e. if you are right-handed, the non-dominant hand is the left hand), hold your top lid up by the eyelashes against your brow bone.

Hold down your bottom lid with the middle finger of your dominant hand. This will align the contact lens on your index finger of your dominant hand with the eye's surface. Keeping your gaze steady looking into the mirror, place the contact lens directly on the coloured part of the eye's surface (the cornea). Once the lens has made contact with the ocular surface, take the index finger away.

The lens should stay on the eye's surface. To ensure the lens doesn't easily blink out, maintain hold of the top lid against the brow bone. Then centre the contact lens on the cornea by nudging the lens upwards using the lower lid.

This will also push out any air bubbles which may be present. Once the lens appears centred, slowly release the top lid and allow it to blink over the contact lens. Keep blinking for a couple of seconds to enable the lens to settle.



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REMOVING YOUR LENSES

Wash and dry your hands as previously mentioned. Looking at your eye in the mirror, ensure your lens is properly centred on your eye before removing. If you cannot see the lens edge around the coloured part of the eye, cover over the alternate eye and see if the vision is clear. If it is, your lens is on eye and centred.

Again, hold your top lid by the eyelashes against your brow bone with your non-dominant hand. With your dominant hand, use your middle finger to pull down the lower lid. Then, using the index finger and thumb of your dominant hand, gently squeeze the lens between these two fingers and remove from the coloured part of the eye. Avoid using your fingernails. Ensure that you look at your eye in the mirror whilst removing the lens to keep your eye steady. Repeat for the other lens

SOFT CONVENTIONAL LENS CARE

There are many different types of contact lenses and each type requires a different level of care and maintenance. As a pair of conventional custom soft lenses is used for a longer period of time compared to disposable lenses, the cleaning process is more rigorous for these lenses. Lenses should be cleaned on a daily basis with a soft lens cleaner.

Remove the lens and place it in the palm of your hand. Then place a few drops of daily cleaner on the lens in your palm and rub the lens using the ball of your finger. Once it has been rubbed on both sides for approximately 15 seconds, rinse the daily cleaner from the lens using saline

IMPORTANT NOTE: DO NOT GET CLEANER IN YOUR EYE



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If cleaner is mistakenly left on a lens and inserted into the eye, remove the contact lens immediately and flush out the eye with saline or water for several minutes. Do not reinsert a lens until the eye has fully settled, which may be up to 24 hours later. The recommended cleaner for your lens is _____.

The lens should be rinsed with _____. Once the contact lens has been cleaned and rinsed in saline, it must be stored and disinfected appropriately overnight. We recommend a hydrogen peroxide system to give the most comprehensive clean to conventional soft lenses. To use a hydrogen peroxide system, make sure the appropriate storage case is used (only use the case provided with system and no other storage case).

Place the cleaned contact lens in the appropriately marked (R or L) basket in the storage case. Fill the clear case to the line with hydrogen peroxide solution. If you are using the OmniCare system, insert a tablet provided with the solution into the case in order to neutralize the hydrogen peroxide. Alternatively, if you are using the OxySept solution, the metal disk found under the basket container in the storage case will neutralize the hydrogen peroxide.

Make sure the lenses are left in the hydrogen peroxide for at least six hours to ensure all the solution is neutralized to water. Afterwards, remove the lenses from their baskets, rinse with saline and insert them into the eyes. Depending on the wearer, you may also choose to put a drop of lubricating solution on the inside of your lens before insertion.

If the lenses are left soaking in a neutralised solution for more than a week, the process should again be repeated before wearing the lenses again. Your recommended hydrogen peroxide soaking solution for your lenses is _____.



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DO'S AND DON'TS

- Always keep the lenses in solution when not wearing to ensure they don't dry out and become permanently damaged.
- Never store or rinse your lenses in tap water.
- Only use the prescribed cleaning solutions with the lenses.
- DO NOT use any eye drops with the lenses in, except for tear lubricating drops suitable for use with contact lenses, such as **Blink Contacts** or **Refresh Contacts**.
- DO NOT wear your lenses on any long plane flights as they will start to dry out significantly after 3-4 hours in the dry cabin air.
- If wearing monovision or multifocal contacts there will be a period of adaptation where judging distances and reaction times are slower to adjust. Greater care needs to be taken with such tasks until you are fully adapted to the lenses.
- DO NOT wear your contacts if you are ill or have the flu as there is a high risk of getting eye infections at these times.
- DO NOT swim in pools without wearing goggles, in order to prevent infection or loss of lenses, and ensure your lenses are cleaned within an hour of getting out.
- DO NOT smoke with contact lens wear, if you can help it, as the risk of serious eye infections is much greater.
- DO NOT wear lenses that have expired.
- When applying makeup, put it on after inserting your contacts and remove your contacts before removing your makeup at the end of the night.
- DO NOT try to remove a lens that's sticking to your eye. Apply some lubricating drops and massage your eyelid to make the lens move freely before attempting to remove.



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SIGNS OF PROBLEMS

All contact lenses are designed to be compatible with your eyes, and you should have trouble free wear, however there is a small risk of infection with all contact lens wear. This can include serious complications like corneal ulcers, which can leave permanent scarring and blurred vision.

Current research indicates the risk of a serious eye infection with daily disposables is approx. 1 in 5,000. If any of the following signs or symptoms occur, take the lenses out immediately, examine the lens for any splits or defects, and seek our professional advice as soon as is practical:

- Persistent redness, particularly if it lasts overnight.
- Soreness or discomfort after lens removal.
- Soreness or discomfort that persists even after the lens has been removed, cleaned and rinsed, and reinserted.
- Severe pain or light sensitivity.
- Extreme redness.
- Abnormal blurring and mistiness of the vision.

Never continue to wear a lens that is sore or uncomfortable for any length of time.

Remember: "IF IN DOUBT, TAKE IT OUT!"



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FOLLOW UP VISITS

Always wear your lenses to your contact lens follow up visits UNLESS you have been suffering with significant sore eyes. Try to insert your lenses at least two hours before the appointment so we can evaluate the lens fitting accurately and also assess for any adverse eye reactions.

If you were unable to wear the lenses on the day of your appointment because you were too busy, it is better to re-book for another day so that a comprehensive evaluation can be performed.

In the event of a very sore eye, please contact us on **(07) 5532 7398** or for after hours emergencies contact Celia Bloxsom on **0421633792**