

What are contact lenses?

Contact lens refers to any lens that is placed on the surface of the cornea and sclera either for optical purposes (for improvement of vision) or therapeutic purposes (treatment of eye disorders.)

Main Types of Contact Lenses

1) Hard Contact Lenses

They are easier to maintain and are less expensive than the more popular soft contact lenses but are invariably uncomfortable to wear.

2) Gas Permeable Contact Lenses

(Rigid lenses/RGP lenses)

They are advised in people where hard lenses cause corneal oedema or epithelial changes. They are fragile than hard lenses but harder than soft lenses.

3) Soft Contact Lenses

The most popular and expensive of the contact lenses.

Soft contacts do not cause any initial discomfort and the adjustment time period is much less.

They are an ideal type of lens for sportsmen or for people whose activities would be hampered if hard lenses or gas permeable lenses were used. Moreover, the soft lenses have much less chance of slipping out of the eye accidentally.

4) Disposable Contact Lenses

These are soft contact lenses, which are used for a specific period of time for e.g. a week, a day or a month and then discarded.

They have less chance of getting contaminated and infected as they are replaced at short intervals.

5) Misc types:

a) Coloured contact lenses



b) Rose K contact lens for keratoconus

c) Toric contact lens for high cylinder power

d) Bifocal contact lens for presbyopia



e) Bandage contact lens for protecting the damaged cornea from mechanical trauma.

Advantages of Contact Lenses

- Cosmetically appealing
- Minimal spectacles blur especially in patients with high refractive error.

Contact lens care (soft lens)

To insure your eyes always stay healthy and oxygenated these steps are essential

1. **Solutions and cleaning:** Rubbing the lens after taking them out and putting them in, it is essential to change the solution in the lens case everyday to ensure all day long comfort and also to maintain the hygiene.



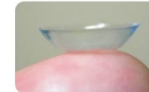
- o The lens case if possible should be changed every month. Clean the case at least once a week with warm soapy water.
- o Contact lens needs to be inserted before applying any make up, eye creams or hand lotions.

2. Insertion of contact lens

- o The first and most important thing to do is wash your hands..
- o Next is to check the right way to put the lens in.
- o The lens will go in your eye both ways but if the wrong side is inserted the lens will feel uncomfortable and may even pop out.



(Right)



(Wrong)

The Bowl test - Place the lens on the tip of your finger. If the edge of the lens is slightly curved in and looks like the shape of a bowl this is the correct side up. If on the other hand the edges of the lens are curved out this is the wrong side

- o Place the contact lens on the index finger of the hand you write with.
- o With the same hand take the middle finger and hold the bottom lid open.
- o With the free hand reach over and hold the top lid close to the lashes open.
- o Bring the finger closer to the eye until all edges of the lens are touching the eye.
- o The contact lens will release from your finger to your eye.
- o Let go of the lids slowly.
- o Slowly close your eye to get rid of any air bubbles that may have occurred.
- o Repeat this process for the other eye.

3. **Removal of Lenses:** Pull the lens down with the index finger and bring in the thumb and pinch the lens out.

4. **Wearing Schedule:** When starting to wear the lens you must start off slowly and then build it up. Initially you should start wearing the contact lenses for about 4 hours, and then gradually build this up by 2 hours everyday until you get to 8-10 hours which is the recommended

5. Emergencies and Discomfort: If you find that you have any of the following, remove your lenses and contact your ophthalmologist as soon as possible.

- O Burning and Watering eyes
- o Persistent Pain
- o Constant Redness
- o Sensitivity to Light
- o Hazy vision that remains for an hour or so after removal.

Dispelling some Myths about Contact Lenses.

Myth 1: Contact Lenses are cumbersome and difficult to use.

Fact: With proper instructions from your ophthalmologist and regular use, using contact lenses gets as easy as using spectacles themselves.

Myth 2: Contact Lenses cause infection and allergies.

Fact: It happens not because of contact lenses but the improper use of it.

Myth 3: Contact lens usually falls out of eye.

Fact: Decades ago, old-style hard lenses were prone to do this. But with today's contact lenses, this problem is a distant memory.

Myth 4: Contact lenses are not meant for children or old people.

Fact: Use of contact lenses does not depend upon the age factor. Your child can use lenses for correcting the vision if he/ she is responsible enough to take care of them.

Myth 5: Wearing contact lenses seems painful and almost impossible.

Fact: Soft contact lenses are designed with the comfort of the wearer comfort as the primary concern. It does take a little practice but putting your contact lenses in soon becomes a quick and simple habit for people and eyes soon grow accustomed to the contact lenses.



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