

## Decorative Contact Lenses are Not Safe

Halloween is right around the corner, and for many people that means going all out to create the best costume and makeup. But one popular Halloween accessory can be a danger to your eyes. Decorative contact lenses, which can change the look of your eyes, may seem like a great way to enhance your costume, but the American Academy of Ophthalmology reminds consumers that serious eye disorders can be caused by over-the-counter lenses.

“Some Internet sites market decorative contacts as if they were cosmetics, advertising ‘one size fits all’ and ‘no need to see an eye specialist.’ Nothing could be further from the truth,” said Thomas Steinemann, MD, associate professor of ophthalmology, Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland and a clinical correspondent for the Academy. “Many ophthalmologists have seen the damage these over-the-counter lenses can cause. Inflammation and pain are common; serious problems such as corneal abrasions and even blinding infections also occur.”

Although over-the-counter sales of nonprescription cosmetic lenses have been illegal in the United States since 2005, decorative contacts are still widely available in retail stores and on the Internet. They are especially popular at Halloween as accessories to costumes.

Don’t risk your vision for a Halloween effect. To protect your eyes, all contact lenses, including nonprescription lenses, must be fitted by an eye care professional who will instruct you on correct use.

For more information about contact lenses and proper contact care guidelines please visit [www.geteyesmart.org/eyesmart/correction/contacts.cfm](http://www.geteyesmart.org/eyesmart/correction/contacts.cfm).

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