

Take Proper Care of Your Contact Lenses

The issue of contact lens safety has drawn recent attention, following a recent public meeting held by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration on contact lens product testing and universal care guidelines. The American Academy of Ophthalmology, the Contact Lens Association of Ophthalmologists, the Cornea Society and the American Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgery have outlined the important steps consumers should take to safeguard against eye infections.

These are the *key* care guidelines contact lens wearers should follow:

- Before handling contact lenses, wash your hands with soap and water, then rinse and dry them with a lint-free towel.
- Minimize contact with water, including removing lenses before going swimming or in a hot tub.
- Contact lenses should not be rinsed with or stored in water (tap or sterile water).
- During cleaning, rub your contact lenses with your fingers, then rinse the lenses with solution before soaking them. This “rub and rinse” method is considered by some experts to be a superior method of cleaning, even if the solution you are using is a “no-rub” variety.
- Rinse the contact lens case with fresh solution — not water. Then leave the empty case open to air dry.
- Keep the contact lens case clean and replace it regularly, at least every three months. Lens cases can be a source of contamination and infection. Do not use cracked or damaged lens cases.
- Handle your contact lens solution with care:
 - Do not re-use old solution or “top off” the solution in your lens case.
 - Do not transfer contact lens solution into smaller travel-size containers. This can affect the sterility of the solution, which can lead to an eye infection.
 - Do not allow the tip of the solution bottle to come in contact with any surface, and keep the bottle tightly closed when not in use.

Contact lens wearers who experience eye infection symptoms like redness, pain, excessive tearing, increased light sensitivity, blurry vision, discharge or swelling should immediately see their ophthalmologist. For a complete list of contact lens care guidelines, please go to geteyesmart.org.

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