

Eye on Health

Elevate Your Eye Care—Top Tips To Maximize Contact Lens Safety

(NAPSA)—Many contact lens wearers regard their contact lenses as consumer products that can be purchased and used with as much thought and consideration as toothpaste, sunscreen and other health and beauty items. However, it is important to understand that contact lenses are, in fact, medical devices and should be used with the same care and consideration as other medical products. To remind contact lens wearers about the importance of contact lens care, eye care professionals are encouraging people who wear contact lenses to “get back to basics.”

“We need to let the public know that there is a new standard of care for soft contact lenses, with the important goal of preventing infection and promoting eye health,” said Joe Shovlin, O.D., from Scranton, Pennsylvania, one of the eye doctors participating in an awareness campaign called Elevate Your Eye (EYE) Care.

Based on his involvement in the EYE Care campaign, Dr. Shovlin offers five tips for lens wearers:

1) **Rub, rub, rub your lenses clean.** In recent years, “no-rub” cleaning solutions became popular, but today most eye doctors advocate using a “rub-and-rinse” approach. “The latest research found that nearly all eye care professionals recommend a rub-and-rinse regimen to their patients,” said Dr. Shovlin. “I believe that rubbing lenses clean is the safest approach, and would say, simply, ‘no rub, no clean.’”

It is important to clean lenses each time they are handled. If you use a multipurpose solution, place a few drops of solution in your palm before placing your contact lens in your hand, then rub for a full 10 seconds (about the same amount of time it takes to send a text message) on each side of the



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lens in a back and forth and up and down motion across the lens. Then, rinse the lens with more of the solution for five seconds on each side before placing it in your contact lens case with brand-new multipurpose solution and allow lenses to soak for a minimum of six hours for disinfection, cleaning and protein removal.

2) **Always rinse lenses with contact lens solution, never with tap water.** Even though tap water is fine to drink, it may harbor a microorganism that can cause an infection in your eye. Consequently, lenses and tap water should not mix. Yet a recent survey found more than one in five contact lens wearers is unaware of the danger.

“Contact lens solutions are specially formulated to clean your lenses and guard your eyes,” said David Hansen, O.D., director of Professional Services at Advanced Medical Optics (AMO), an eye care company that is leading the efforts behind the EYE Care awareness campaign. “Using a quality lens solution, such as AMO’s new Complete® Multi-Purpose Solution Easy-Rub™ Formula, not only protects your eyes, but can also make them feel better,” said Dr. Hansen.

3) **Avoid wearing contacts in swimming pools, hot tubs and showers.** Seventy percent of contact lens users report going into water while wearing their lenses. Although no one wants to be inconvenienced, the risk of tap water or treated water getting on your lenses becomes significant in a wet environment. Other concerns include the chemicals used in pools and hot tubs, and the risk of losing your lenses.

4) **Don’t let your lens case become an infection point.** Doctors advise patients to clean out their lens cases every day with contact lens solution and replace their cases every one to three months. Think of your contact lens case as having an expiration date. A recent survey, though, found that the majority of contact lens wearers does not follow either recommendation, and some never clean their cases.

Contact lens wearers should also avoid “topping off” the case—that is, just adding a little new solution, without emptying the used solution and rinsing out the case. Used solution can harbor harmful bacteria, which can contribute to infection.

5) **Listen to your eye doctor—and make sure your eye doctor listens to you.** “Your eyes are different from mine, so we need to discuss what works best for you as an individual,” said Dr. Shovlin. He has seen problems arise when patients change disinfecting solutions without talking to their doctors. “Contact lenses are not just another product, but are more akin to a sensitive medical device,” he said. “We need to all take more time to discuss eye safety—because our eyes are worth it.”

For additional tips or to download a video podcast of the EYE Care Guide, visit www.yourhealthyees.com.