


Safely cleaning and storing your contact lenses is the best way to prevent eye infections. Lenses can collect bacteria, fungi, and other germs if not properly cleaned.



Contact Lens Safety

Why should you clean your contact lenses?

Contact wearers are at risk of eye infections since contacts are worn directly on the eye. Eye infections can cause pain, blurred vision, and sometimes even blindness. Proper contact lens cleaning, storing, and hygiene are the best way to keep your eyes healthy.



Replace contact storage cases every 3 to 6 months.

When should you wear contact lenses?

Most types of contact lenses are only worn while awake. Contact lenses should not be worn when:

- ◆ Sleeping (some can be worn overnight).
- ◆ Showering.
- ◆ Swimming in the pool or ocean.

Some types of extended wear lenses can be worn overnight. Talk to your eye care provider about when to remove contact lenses.



How should you clean and store your contact lenses?

Follow your eye care provider's and manufacturer's instructions for cleaning and storing your contact lenses.

1. Always clean hands before touching your eyes and contact lenses.
2. Remove the lens and place in the palm of your hand.
3. Rub contact lens solution over the surface of the lens for 5 to 10 seconds on each side.
4. Rinse lens with a stream of solution to remove bacteria and deposits from the lens.
5. Store lenses in the proper storage case with fresh solution.
6. After removing lenses from the storage case, rinse case with fresh solution and allow to air dry. Never use tap water to rinse your contact lens case.
7. Replace your contact lens storage case every 3 to 6 months.

Discuss with your provider:

- ◆ Which contact lens products and solutions to use.
- ◆ How often to replace your contact lenses.

If you wear contact lenses:

Always:

- ◆ See your eye care provider for regular exams.
- ◆ Clean hands before touching your eyes and lenses.
- ◆ Use fresh, sterile solutions recommended by your provider for lens cleaning and storage.
- ◆ Remove your contact lenses and see your eye care provider if your eyes become red, irritated, or if you have problems seeing.
- ◆ Contact your provider if you have any problems with your eyes, vision, or lenses.

Never:

- ◆ Re-use any lens solutions. Always discard all storage solutions after use. Used solutions can become contaminated with germs that can cause eye infections.
- ◆ Expose your lenses to water, including distilled, bottled, tap, lake, or ocean water. Water can contain germs that cause eye infections.
- ◆ Use saliva to wet your contact lenses.
- ◆ Transfer sterile contact lens solution to another container for later use.

Never expose contact lenses to water.

What are signs of an eye infection?

- ◆ Discomfort.
- ◆ Excessive tearing or mucus.
- ◆ Unusual sensitivity to light.
- ◆ Itching.
- ◆ Burning.
- ◆ “Gritty” feeling.
- ◆ Unusual redness.
- ◆ Blurred vision.
- ◆ Swelling.
- ◆ Pain.

See your eye care provider immediately if you have signs of an eye infection.

See your eye care provider **immediately** if you have signs of an eye infection. Eye infections can be serious and in some cases cause blindness.

Allergies can cause some of the same signs as an eye infection. Allergies usually affect both eyes equally. Some infections may affect only one eye.

For more on contact lens safety see:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):

Parasites – Acanthamoeba; Contact Wearers

www.cdc.gov/parasites/acanthamoeba/contact_wearers.html

Food and Drug Administration (FDA):

Focusing on Contact Lens Safety

www.fda.gov/forconsumers/consumerupdates/ucm048893.htm

Video on Contact Lens Safety

www.accessdata.fda.gov/videos/cdrh/contactlens.wmv

Ensuring Safe Use of Contact Lens Solution

www.fda.gov/forconsumers/consumerupdates/ucm164197.htm