

Signs of Infection from Contact Lenses

This material will help you understand causes, symptoms, treatment, and prevention of eye infections from wearing contact lenses.

What are the risks of wearing contact lenses?

Contact lenses are very safe and easy to use, but they do have a risk of eye infection. The most common infection caused by wearing contacts is called keratitis. Keratitis is an infection of the cornea, the clear domed window in front of the eye. You can develop this type of infection if you do not clean your contacts properly. Wearing contacts at night, old contacts or contacts that do not fit well can scratch the surface of your cornea. This can also put you at risk of infection.

Scratches make it easier for infectious agents like bacteria and fungus to enter your eye. In serious cases, infections can cause blood vessels to grow in your cornea or lead to scarring. Learn to recognize the signs and symptoms of an infection. It is important to receive early treatment in order to prevent complications.

What are the signs and symptoms of an infection?

- Blurry or fuzzy vision
- Red, irritated eyes
- Discomfort while wearing contacts
- Pain in or around your eyes
- Discharge or pus
- Watery eyes

- Sensitivity to light

What should I do if I think I have an infection?

If you notice any of the symptoms above, you should remove your contacts. Call your eye doctor right away. You may need to set up an appointment to have your eyes examined.

How are infections from contact lenses treated?

Eye infections are usually treated with antibiotic drops. Your doctor will prescribe drops according to the severity of your infection. If you have any complications like the formation of blood vessels, your doctor may prescribe additional medications. You may have to stop wearing contacts until the problem is resolved.

What can I do to prevent infections?

Problems from wearing contacts can be prevented by taking the following steps:

1. Follow your eye doctor's instructions on how to clean and store your contacts.
2. Read and follow the directions on your lens cleaning solution. Use the "rub and rinse" method of cleaning even if you have a "no rub" solution.
3. Wear contacts according to the recommended schedule. Throw away contacts after you have used them for the recommended amount of time.
4. Have regular eye exams to make sure your contacts fit properly and your prescription has not changed.
5. Do not wear your lenses when sleeping, unless you are prescribed special lenses for overnight wear

If you have frequent eye infections or have difficulty caring for contacts, talk to your doctor about daily disposable lenses or whether contacts are the best option for you.

For more information, scan these codes with your smartphone or visit the websites listed.



<http://www.geteyesmart.org/eyesmart/diseases/contact-lens-related-infections.cfm>



<http://www.aoa.org/patients-and-public/caring-for-your-vision/contact-lenses/signs-of-potential-problems?sso=y>

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