

## Contact lens care

Haley van Wyk, BPharm

### Introduction

Contact lenses are an extremely convenient way to correct vision and are safely used by millions of people every day. However, they do require some extra care and attention in handling and keeping them clean to avoid the risk of eye infection.<sup>1,2</sup> Risk of infection varies somewhat depending on the type of contact lens. Single-use daily disposable lenses are the safest type of soft contact lens, in terms of reducing the risk of infection. Rigid gas permeable lenses are a safer alternative than any type of soft contact lens.<sup>2</sup>

### Taking care of contact lenses

Caring for contact lenses requires a combination of cleaning, disinfecting, soaking and wetting, rinsing and storing. Some products combine two or more of these steps.<sup>3</sup>

#### The following tips and techniques are recommended to ensure proper care of contact lenses<sup>1-6</sup>:

- Before handling contact lenses, wash and rinse hands with a mild soap and water to prevent dirt and germs being transferred to the eye.
- Dry the hands with a clean, lint-free towel.
- Remove one lens and clean it with the recommended solution. During cleaning rub the lens in the palm of the hand with a few drops of solution, even if using a “no-rub” product. Rinse the lenses with solution before soaking them.
- Contact lenses should not be rinsed or stored in water (tap or distilled).
- Never put a contact lens in the mouth to rinse or wet it. Saliva is not a sterile solution.

- Keep the contact lens well lubricated at all times, either with artificial tears in the eyes, or stored in solution in the contact lens case.
- Clean the lens case every time it is used. Use fresh sterile solution. Let it air dry. Replace the lens case regularly, at least every three months. Lens cases may be a source of contamination and infection. Do not use cracked or damaged lens cases.
- Some contact lenses need special care and products. Use only contact lens solution to store or rinse the contact lenses. Always use the disinfecting solution, eye drops, and enzymatic cleaners recommended by the eye-care professional. Cleaning removes eye-produced build-up, cosmetics and other debris that impair lens comfort. Using incompatible products may ruin contact lenses or harm the eyes.
  - **Saline** is for rinsing and storing contact lenses. It is also used with enzymatic cleaning tablets.
  - **Daily protein remover** is a liquid that is used daily to remove protein from lenses. It is used together with a multi-purpose solution.
  - **Multi-purpose solution** is for cleaning, disinfecting, rinsing and storing contact lenses. The lenses are cleaned, rinsed and disinfected, all with the same solution.
  - **Enzymatic cleaning tablets** are dissolved in saline and used on a weekly basis to remove protein deposits from contact lenses. The lenses are soaked in the solution for 15–20 minutes.
  - **Wetting agents** are used to moisten contact lenses while in the eyes during the day or on awakening.

#### Handle the contact lens solution with care<sup>2</sup>:

- Do not re-use old solution or “top up” the solution in the lens case.
- Don’t let the tip of solution bottles touch other surfaces, like the fingers, eyes, or contacts, as this may contaminate the solution.

- Do not transfer contact lens solution into smaller travel-size containers. This may affect the sterility of the solution, which can lead to an eye infection.

**“Do not re-use old solution or ‘top up’ the solution in the lens case.”**

### Conclusion

Contact lenses are a convenient solution to visual problems. The key to success is clean lenses. Inconsistent or improper use of cleaning solutions may result in lens damage and

eye infections, while regular and thorough cleaning and disinfecting will ensure visual clarity and comfortable lens wear.

### References

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