

Optometry Department

Instruction Leaflet for Rigid Gas Permeable (RGP) Contact Lens Wearers

You have been prescribed a rigid gas permeable contact lens. This leaflet will explain how to care for your new contact lens.

- Before inserting or removing your lenses, you must always wash your hands with soap and water then dry them thoroughly with a clean lint-free towel.
- Take care not to catch the lens or your eye with your fingernails – keep your nails short.
- Work over a clean, flat surface, or if rinsing over a wash basin, remember to put the plug in first.
- Use saline solution to rinse your lenses and cases – do NOT rinse them with tap water as this can cause serious eye infections.
- To minimise the possibility of mixing your lenses up, it is a good idea to get into the habit of always inserting and removing the same lens first.

Lens insertion

1. Remove the lens from the storage case.
2. Add one drop of soaking/conditioning solution. Gently rub solution over the lens so that both sides of the lens are covered.
3. Place the lens onto the index finger of your dominant hand and ensure the lens is not deposited or damaged, particularly checking the edges for nicks.
4. Hold your bottom eyelid down with the middle finger of your preferred hand and lift the top eyelid up with your other hand – maintain a firm hold of the top eyelid to prevent blinking.



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5. Keep looking straight at the lens and bring the lens towards your eye. If you keep your eye looking straight at the lens then the lens will be positioned towards the centre of your eye. Place the lens gently on your cornea.
6. Let go of your bottom eyelid first and then gently close your top eyelid.
7. Blink slowly and gently until the lens begins to feel comfortable.
8. If you wear a lens in the other eye, repeat for the second lens.
9. Discard the solution from your case, rinse the case with saline and leave the case to air dry.

Lens removal

There are four different methods of removing your contact lenses. You will be advised as to the most appropriate method for you.

Method 1:

- Look straight ahead and press the edge of your **lower** eyelid against the eyeball beneath the contact lens
- Lift the **top** eyelid above the contact lens and then push it towards the eyeball and then downwards towards the lower lid – the lens should be pushed out and resting between the eyelashes.

Method 2

- Look straight ahead and open your eyes as wide as possible
- Place your index finger at the outer corner of your eye and pull your eyelids tight over towards your ear
- Blink – the lens should come out

Method 3

- Look straight ahead and pull the edge of the **lower** eyelid towards your ear
- Lift your **top** eyelid so that it is above the edge of the contact lens and then pull it over towards your ear
- Look towards your nose
- Blink

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Method 4

- If methods 1,2 and 3 are unsuccessful, a suction holder may be used
- Wet the end of the suction holder with saline and place onto the contact lens
- Pull gently to remove the lens from the eye
- Remove the suction holder from the lens by sliding it off

After you remove the contact lens from your eye, it must be cleaned before it is put into the storage case in order to remove microbes and deposits that have built up on the lens during the day.

Lens cleaning and disinfection

Always use the care system recommended to you in the clinic

1. Place the lens on the palm of your hand and put two or three drops of the **cleaning** solution onto the lens.
2. Rub the lens gently but firmly for approximately 30 seconds with the little finger of your other hand.
3. After rubbing the lens, it is essential to rinse it thoroughly with saline solution in order to remove the loosened debris and any remaining cleaner. Rinse the cleaning solution off the lens by rubbing the lens between thumb and forefinger with **saline**.
4. Fill the storage case with **soaking/conditioning** solution and place the lens into the correct side of the case. This soaking solution **must** be changed on a daily basis.
5. Repeat steps 1-4 with the lens for the other eye (if you wear a lens in each eye).
6. Leave the lenses to soak overnight in the case.

Contact Lens Case Hygiene

- Eye infections can occur due to poor lens case cleaning. The contact lens case should be scrubbed with a dedicated toothbrush on a weekly basis with saline and leave to air dry. Do NOT use soap in case it is not fully rinsed away.
- The contact lens case should be replaced with a new one every three months. These are usually supplied with new bottles of solutions.

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Blinking

Correct blinking is very important while wearing contact lenses. Patients should look straight ahead and completely close both eyes slowly and gently, and then re-open after a slight pause. After insertion of the contact lenses, a few gentle blinks will make the lenses comfortable more quickly. For the first few days of wear, patients should ideally aim for 30-40 blinks per minute.

Contact Lens Problems

Occasionally you may experience mild discomfort or redness with your lenses. If discomfort is caused by a dirty, dusty or damaged lens; symptoms will usually improve when the lens is removed. More serious problems, such as corneal infection, are unusual but can cause irritation, pain, redness, tearing or discharge. The eyes may also be sensitive to light and vision may be blurred. In almost all cases of infection, symptoms are not relieved by removing the contact lens.

What are the chances of getting an infection?

Fortunately, serious sight-threatening contact lens-related corneal infections are rare, affecting about 4 in 10,000 contact lens wearers per year.

If you suspect you have an eye infection or other problem that needs medical attention, do not delay in seeking medical advice.

Problem Solving

Re-centring a displaced lens

If a lens moves onto the white of your eye, you will need to locate it and re-centre it onto the cornea:

1. Pull down the **lower** eyelid.
2. If the lens has lodged downwards, hold the **top** eyelid then place one or two fingers onto the **lower** eyelid margin to gently push the lens back onto the coloured part of your eye.
3. If the lens was not beneath the lower eyelid, then it is either under the **top** eyelid or it has **fallen out**.

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4. If the lens is under the **top** eyelid, look down to the floor and gently touch the skin of the **upper eyelid** to find the lens.
5. Gently massage the lens down until it can be seen and then follow point two above.
6. If the lens has decentred to the side, you can take the lens out from that position using method 1 of removing a contact lens (see above).

Remember, a contact lens **cannot** go behind the eye. If you cannot relocate the lens, seek the advice of a member of the **contact lens clinic** or local **contact lens practitioner** (optometrist or ophthalmologist).

Do's and Don'ts of contact lens wear

1. Never sleep in your contact lenses
2. Never wear a chipped or torn lens as it may damage your eye – always inspect the lens before insertion
3. Never swim, shower or bathe in contact lenses
4. Never clean or wet your contact lenses with saliva, tap water, household detergents, chemicals or cleaning fluids
5. Take care when applying any form of make-up, hairspray or perfume not to get them on the contact lenses. Best practice is to put hairspray on before you insert contact lenses and put make-up on once the contact lenses have been inserted.
6. Always clean your contact lenses as instructed. Most contact lens complications result from poor compliance.
7. Never re-use or top-up contact lens solutions in the case. Check expiry dates on bottles and how long you can safely keep the solution once the bottle has been opened.
8. If you wear your contact lenses infrequently, change the solution in the case at least once a week.

Aftercare Checks

After you have been fitted with contact lenses, a series of aftercare appointments are necessary for as long as you continue to wear lenses. These will check that the contact lenses are fitting on your eyes correctly and that the eyes are remaining healthy. The timing of these checks will vary to suit individual needs, but will decrease in frequency up to 12 months between visits. We are happy to see you at more regular intervals,

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especially if you have any problems or queries, so please call the clinic for advice/an appointment.

For all aftercare visits, you should come wearing your contact lenses (preferably for at least 3 hours that day) and bring your contact lens case and any spectacles with you.

We are responsible for the fitting of the contact lenses, but we are NOT responsible for the detection of other eye diseases (for example glaucoma) which aren't related to contact lens wear. For this reason, it is important that you still attend your local optometrist for regular eye examinations (at least every 2 years).

Contact Details

If you have any queries about the care of your contact lenses, please contact the contact lens clinic on 0246 96 6516 (Monday –Friday 9.00am – 4.00pm)

In an emergency, contact Eye casualty or your local A&E department.

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this Information in another language or format please contact 02476 96 6516 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

The Trust operates a smoke free policy

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