



How to Avoid Eye Infection or Injury

Contact lens users run the risk of pink eye (conjunctivitis), corneal abrasions and eye irritation. A common result of eye infection is corneal ulcers, which are open sores in the outer layer of the cornea (the clear part of the eye over the pupil). Many of these complications **can be avoided** through everyday care of the eye and contact lenses.

To reduce your chances of infection, the FDA recommends the following practices:

- » In general, if you're using multipurpose contact lens solution, replace your contact lens storage case at least every three months or as directed by your eye care provider. If you're using contact lens solution that contains hydrogen peroxide, always use the new contact lens case that comes with each box—and follow all directions that are included on or inside the packaging.
- » Clean and disinfect your lenses properly. When using contact lens solution, read and follow all instructions on the product label to avoid eye injury. This is particularly important if your eye care professional has recommended a solution with hydrogen peroxide, as these solutions require special care.
- » Always remove contact lenses before swimming.
- » Never reuse any lens solution. Always discard all of the used solution after each use, and add fresh solution to your lens case.
- » Do not use any water (which includes distilled water, tap water, and homemade saline solution) on your lenses because it can be a source of microorganisms that may cause serious eye infections. (Contact lens solution is sold in "sterile" containers, which means it is free from living germs or microorganisms.)
- » Never put your lenses in your mouth or put saliva on your lenses. Saliva is not sterile.
- » Never transfer contact lens solutions into smaller travel size containers. These containers are not sterile, and unsterile solution can damage your eyes.
- » Do not wear contact lenses overnight unless your eye care provider has prescribed them to be worn that way. Any lenses worn overnight increase your risk of infection. Wearing contact lenses overnight can stress the cornea by reducing the amount of oxygen to the eye. They can also cause microscopic damage to the surface of the cornea, making it more susceptible to infection.
- » Never ignore symptoms of eye irritation or infection that may be associated with wearing contact lenses. These symptoms include discomfort, excess tearing or other discharge, unusual sensitivity to light, itching, burning, gritty feelings, unusual redness, blurred vision, swelling, or pain. If you experience any of these symptoms, remove your lenses immediately and keep them off. Contact your eye care professional immediately. Keep the lenses, because they may help your eye care professional determine the cause of your symptoms.