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CARE OF CONTACT LENS PATIENTS



Contact lenses are used primarily to treat refractive errors as an alternative to glasses or refractive surgery.

There are many factors that help to determine whether the patient is good candidate for contact lens use and the most important is motivation to succeed.

Before prescribing the contact lenses, proper and complete eye examination and detail history of any other systemic illness is important. Occupational history is also important as in some occupations there is increase chance of allergy and infection after use of contact lens

Contact lens wearers are susceptible to variety of pathological conditions that are either directly or indirectly linked to contact lens use.

All the varieties of contact lens users are affected with these conditions to some extent.

They are grouped as:

1. Hypoxia:

It is defined as insufficient supply of oxygen to the cornea and is most common cause of complications.

This can lead to very tired eyes, discomfort and less tolerance.

To treat hypoxia the water content of lens should be increased. This can be done by shifting to daily/ weekly disposable lens from extended wear or allowing the lens to hydrate in contact lens solutions.

2. Infection and allergic reaction:

Contact lens wear can cause infections from pollens, bacteria and chemicals from the cosmetics.

These infections can also result from the lenses which are too tight or too loose.

Acanthamoeba infections are infection which occurs from the contact lens solutions.

It can lead to allergic conjunctivitis or giant papillary conjunctivitis.

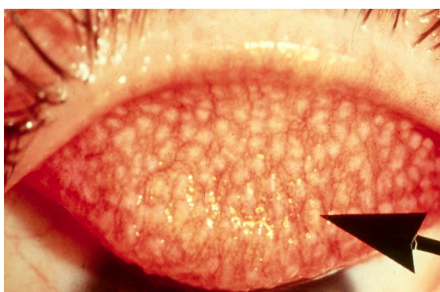


Fig 1.Giant Papillary Conjunctivitis

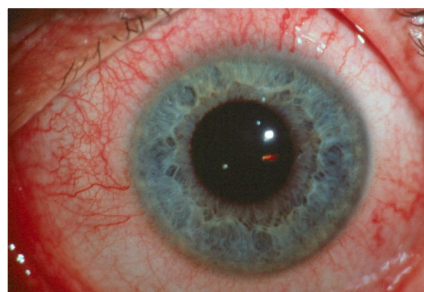


Fig 2: Allergic Conjunctivitis

These infections can be prevented by taking proper care of hygiene of the lens. Immediately after getting the infection you should stop wearing the lens and consult local eye specialist.

3. Dry Eye Syndrome:

It is more common with soft contact lens. These lenses draw the moisture and tears from the eyes and make the eyes dry.

Symptoms include redness, itching burning and intolerance to light. Patients will complaint of foreign body sensation.

Immediately stop using contact lenses for few days and use artificial tears to treat the dry eyes.

Measures taken to avoid these complications/ conditions are given below

Instruction for the patients:

Follow these guidelines for good contact lens care and protect the safety and health of your eyes.

- Always wash your hands with warm water and soap before handling your contact lenses or before touching your eyes. Any residue from lotions, soaps, or chemicals may stick to the contact lens, causing pain, irritation, or blurred vision when they are in your eyes. Dry your hands with a clean towel.
- Wear your contact lenses as prescribed. The wearing schedule depends on the type of contact lens you have selected. Only wear your contact lenses for the time recommended.
- Clean and store your contact lenses as prescribed (in a clean case in fresh solution). Clean your contact lens case after each use with either sterile solution or tap water and let air dry.
- Never use plain water directly on your contact lenses, and never put your contact lenses in your mouth to "rinse" them. Microorganisms can live in even distilled water, causing infection or sight damage.
- Clean your contact lens by rubbing it gently with your index finger in the palm of your hand. The newest "No Rub" solutions allow you to rinse your contact lenses without rubbing.
- If you develop an eye infection (signs include redness, burning, or excessive tearing), remove your contact lenses and discontinue use until you talk with your eye doctor. Wearing a contaminated pair of contact lenses will invite the infection to remain. After resuming contact lens use, closely follow your doctor's instructions to help prevent future eye infections.
- Never wear another person's contact lenses, especially if they have been worn before. Using other people's contact lenses can spread any infection or particles from their eyes to yours.
- Wearing contact lenses may cause your eyes to become more sensitive to sunlight. Wear sunglasses with total UV protection and/or a wide brim hat when in the sun.
- To keep your eyes lubricated, use a rewetting solution or plain saline solution.
- Do not sleep with your contact lenses in your eyes unless you are prescribed special type of lenses.
- During sleep, tears cannot carry healthy amounts of oxygen to the eye, like during the waking hours. As a result, your contact lenses will become dry and stick to your eyes. If you accidentally do fall asleep with your contact lenses in, be sure to put eye drops in your eyes and wait a few minutes before trying to remove your contact lenses.
- See your doctor annually to check your contact lens prescription.
- Visit your eye doctor immediately if you have any degree of sudden vision loss, blurred vision, light flashes, eye pain, infection, swelling, unusual redness, or irritation.
- When first wearing contact lenses you may be concerned about accidentally wearing them inside out. If this happens, they cannot damage your eyes, but they will be uncomfortable. To avoid this, place your contact lens on the tip of your finger so that it is forming a cup. Look at the contact lens from the

side. If the cup looks like it is flaring out at the top and has a lip, your contact lens is inside out. If it looks like the letter "U", the contact lens is right side out.

- Put in your contact lenses before applying makeup to avoid contaminating your contact lens. When removing your makeup be sure that you wash and dry your hands. Once you have done this, remove your contact lenses and then remove your makeup.
- Don't let the tip of solution bottles touch other surfaces, including your fingers, eyes or contact lenses. The solution can become contaminated.
- Do not swim while wearing the lenses.

Most of the conditions are preventable with proper fitting of the lens, appropriate care of the lens and replacement at the right time.

Contact the eye specialist at the right time to prevent the complications as some conditions can lead the permanent vision loss.