

## Patient information

# Soft contact lenses

You have been fitted with soft contact lenses. This information leaflet gives you a little more information on the correct handling of your lenses and the care that is required to make you a happy contact lens wearer and to reduce your risk of eye infections.

## Handling your contact lenses

Always thoroughly wash and dry your hands before you handle your lenses and make sure that your hands are free from perfumes and creams.

Handle your lenses over a clean surface and not over a sink, this is to avoid any contamination with tap water. You should always avoid any tap water near your contact lenses and case.

Be careful, as fingernails can damage the surface of a contact lens.

Always re-clean your lenses if they are dropped.

To tell if a contact lens is the right way around, rest it on the end of your forefinger, with the concave side facing upwards. If the lens is the correct way around, the profile should be bowl-shaped and form a continuous curve. If the lens is inside out, the profile may look more like a saucer, with the edges of the lens splayed out. If this is the case, turn the lens to the correct way around before insertion.

Even some experienced contact lens wearers prefer to insert and remove their lenses by looking in the mirror and certainly when you first start wearing lenses, you should use a mirror to help you. It is quite common to have some difficulty inserting and removing your lenses when you first start wearing them. If this happens, don't panic. Give yourself a break and come back to it later. If you have recurring difficulties let your contact lens practitioner know, so that we can book you an appointment to go through things again.

## **Inserting your contact lenses**

- Remove the contact lens from the case containing the Opti-Free Pure Moist solution.
- Check for any debris on the lens and rinse with a small amount of the solution or saline.
- Place the lens concave side (curved inwards) upwards towards the tip of the forefinger of your dominant hand (the hand you use most).

- Look down towards the floor and use the forefinger of your other hand to pull up your upper eyelid at the lashes. This is in order to prevent the blink reflex.
- Use the middle finger of your dominant hand to pull down on the lower eyelid. Then gently and carefully insert the contact lens onto the eye. You can either place the lens directly onto the cornea (the clear window that is in front of the coloured part of your eye) or you can place it onto the white of the eye and the lens can then centre itself after a blink.
- Let go of the lids gently and one at a time to prevent the contact lens from popping out.
- Check that you are then seeing through the contact lens. If the contact lens has not centred on the cornea, you can try massaging the lens through the closed eyelid. A lens can get attached under the lids, but it is not possible to lose a contact lens at the back of your eyes.

## **Removing your contact lenses**

Use the same technique as described when inserting your lenses to gain control of your upper and lower eyelids, then, with the forefinger of your dominant hand, gently drag the contact lens onto the white of your eyes.

From the white of your eyes, use the forefinger and thumb of your dominant hand to gently pinch from the edges of the contact lens, in order to remove the lens from the surface of the eye. It is important to make sure that you are not using your fingernails at any point.

## **Cleaning your contact lenses**

Once removed from the eyes, your contact lenses need to be cleaned and disinfected. You have been advised to use Opti-Free Pure Moist solution. This cleans, disinfects and conditions your contact lenses and also helps to remove protein and lipid from the lens surface.

To clean a lens, place it in the palm of your hand and wet it with some Opti-Free Pure Moist solution, then rub the lens gently for 20 seconds with the flat of your finger and then rinse the lens thoroughly with some more of the solution.

To disinfect the lenses, they should be stored in the case filled with fresh Opti-Free Pure Moist solution for at least 6 hours before they are re-used. The contact lenses can be stored for up to 30 days in an un-opened case before they need to be re-cleaned and re-disinfected.

You should not change your contact lens solution without first consulting us as some solutions can interact with your lenses and your eyes in an adverse manner.

## **Wearing your lenses**

Lenses are new to your eyes, so you should build your wearing time up gradually. You should never exceed the wearing times recommended to you by your contact lens practitioner, even if your eyes feel comfortable. Try to avoid dusty and smoky environments whilst wearing your lenses, or make sure that you are wearing suitable eye protection. It is best to apply make-up after you have inserted your contact lenses and to remove your contact lenses before taking make-up off. You should avoid mascaras that lengthen or thicken the lashes. Eyeliner should not be used and you should be careful when using hair spray, powder-based make-up and perfumes.

Wearing time initial .....

Hours increase by up to ..... hours

Maximum ..... hours

If your eyes are red or painful, remove your lenses if possible. If pain or redness persists, if your vision is blurred or if you are at all worried, please consult us as soon as possible. Our optometrist is available Monday to Friday 9:00 am to 5:00 pm.

**Optometry Office 01284 712924**

If urgent problems occur outside these hours or you cannot contact the office, you should speak to your local optometrist or GP out of hours

service.

It is quite common to experience some dryness of your eyes when wearing lenses and you might be recommended lubricating drops to keep your eyes more comfortable. These should be preservative-free as preservatives can build up in the contact lens material and cause discomfort.

## **Key do's and don'ts for contact lens wear**

### **Do**

- Always try to handle the same lens first to avoid mix-ups. Your case should be marked right and left.
- Clean your lens case daily with Opti-Free Pure Moist solution and leave it to air-dry or use a clean lint-free tissue.
- Replace your case at least every 3 months.
- Clean and disinfect your lenses after each use.
- Replace your contact lenses as recommended by your contact lens practitioner.
- To reduce the risk of contamination, always place the lids back on

solution bottles straight away after use and do not touch the tips of the solution bottles.

## Don't

- Wear your lenses for longer than is recommended for your eyes, even if the lenses feel comfortable.
- Use your fingernails when handling your lenses; it is best to keep nails short if possible.
- Sleep/doze, shower or swim in your contact lenses.
- Clean your case or contact lenses with tap water, due to the risk of a serious eye infection from Acanthamoeba. You should also avoid hot tubs and fresh water when wearing the lenses.
- Store your contact lenses in saline, as this does not disinfect the lenses.

*If you would like any information regarding access to the West Suffolk Hospital and its facilities please visit the website for AccessAble (the new name for DisabledGo) <https://www.accessable.co.uk/organisations/west-suffolk-nhs-foundation-trust>*



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