

Rigid contact lens wear

Information for patients who receive their contact lenses from Bournemouth Eye Unit

The Eye Unit Patient Information

You are being fitted with Contact Lenses at Bournemouth Eye Unit because you have an eye condition that entitles you to NHS contact lenses. Sometimes we fit lenses within the hospital but then discharge you to the care of a local optician for you to continue with ongoing contact lens checks. This applies if you have been referred with a problem that can be helped with contact lenses but doesn't require ongoing hospital care.

The NHS subsidizes the cost of the contact lenses supplied. For certain lenses there is no charge and likewise, certain benefits exempt you from payment. Otherwise, the NHS requires that you pay a fixed cost towards your lenses and this will be explained to you further when we discuss contact lens fitting with you.

The following information will hopefully help you after contact lens fitting has been undertaken and you have taken your new lenses home to try.

Inserting your rigid contact lenses

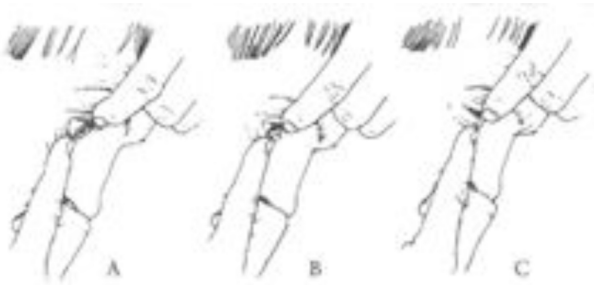
- Wash and dry your hands before handling your lens
- Place the lens on the tip of the first (index) finger, concave side up (like a saucer). You may wish to add an extra drop of conditioning solution to the lens
- Place the second (middle) finger of the same hand, on the centre of your lower lid
- With the first two fingers of your other hand, take a firm hold of the upper eyelid
- Keep looking at the lens and bring it slowly towards the eye, placing it gently onto the centre of the eye, the cornea (over the coloured part of the eye)



- Release the lower lid and then the upper lid. Wait a couple of seconds to allow the lens to settle

Lens removal

- Gently lift your upper lid with your index (first) finger
- Press the upper lid margin back against the eye so that the edge of your upper lid makes firm contact with your eyeball. At the same time, place the index finger of the other hand on the lower lid margin directly below the lower edge of the contact lens and press the lower eyelid gently but firmly against the eye
- Slowly push the top eyelid downwards (keeping the pressure back against the eyeball). The top eyelid should slide under the contact lens and the lens will fall out of the eye. Do not push up with the lower eyelid; just ensure that the lower eyelid is pressed against the eye so that the contact lens can not slip down.



Note: It is important to have the fingers positioned properly at the edge of the lid margins. The finger on the lower eyelid needs to point upwards immediately below the contact lens and the finger on the upper eyelid needs to point vertically downwards from above the contact lens

Rigid lenses can also be removed using a lens removal device (a plunger). Gently apply the lens remover to the lens while looking straight ahead. Lift the lens gently off the eye. When using a lens remover make sure that it is placed directly on the lens and not on the surface of the eye. If you accidentally place the plunger directly onto the eye and it sticks DO NOT pull it off. Put lots of artificial tears into the eye and the plunger should float off.

If the lens moves off the centre of your eye

A lens cannot get lost around the back of your eye but it can be difficult to find if it slips under the upper lid. Find the lens by pulling the lids apart as widely as possible while looking into a mirror. Once you have found the lens look in the opposite direction to the lens and use the eyelids to gently push the lens back into position. Be gentle with the lens and let it slide back into place. If you are not able to slide the lens back into place, lubricate the eye well with artificial tears and contact Acute Referral Clinic: **0300 019 4181**.

Getting used to your lenses

Rigid lenses are normally uncomfortable to wear at first. It can take a few months of wearing the lenses for a little longer each day to get used to them. Before you leave the eye unit with your lenses you will be advised on the maximum time your lenses can be worn each day in order to adapt to the lenses as comfortably and safely as possible. It is important that you follow this advice. If your eyes look healthy at your next review appointment you may be advised that you can increase the amount of time that the lenses can be worn.

Caring for your contact lenses

- The main problem for contact lens wearers comes from infection. This risk is minimized when instructions regarding contact lens wear, cleaning and disinfection are followed. An important rule is to always wash your hands before handling your contact lenses. To help prevent infection follow the instructions for wearing, cleaning and disinfecting your lenses.
- Rigid lenses must be cleaned and disinfected each time they are worn. Please follow the instructions provided with your contact lens cleaning solutions. Use fresh solution daily; don't just 'top-up' your contact lens case.
- Only use the cleaner and disinfectant recommended by your practitioner. These were chosen with your specific lenses in mind. Before changing brands, check with your practitioner to make sure that the solutions you use are compatible with each other and with your lenses. Avoid using solution bottles for longer than recommended (bottles can typically be used for 30 to 60 days after opening).
- Keeping your contact lens case clean is also important. Rinse the case with saline each day and allow it to air dry. The case must be replaced regularly-for example, when buying new solutions. It should be replaced at least every three months.
- Enzyme Cleaning: some people need an enzyme cleaner to help remove built-up protein from their lens. This will be explained further if advised for you.
- Storing lenses: If, with the agreement of your lens care practitioner, you are keeping an old contact lens as a spare you will probably be advised to store it dry. Clean the lens and rinse it with saline. Dab the lens dry with a soft clean tissue and place it in a clean contact lens case. Keep stored lenses at room temperature. Before wearing the lens again, clean and disinfect it (leave the lens in 'wetting and soaking solution overnight').
- Ongoing Care: While a rigid lens can last for several years this will vary. Some patients need to replace their lenses more frequently than others. A contact lens review appointment is needed at least once a year. This check will ensure that the condition, fit and power of the lens are all as they should be. The health of the front of the eye (the cornea) and your eyelids will also be checked.

Other important points

- Do not wear your lenses in a hot-tub or for swimming
- Remove your lenses before sleeping
- If possible, have an up-to-date pair of spectacles available in case you are not able to wear your lenses
- If you need to speak to the contact lens service please telephone our secretary on **0300 019 4422**

Emergencies

Hopefully you will be able to wear your lenses safely and comfortably. However, if your eye becomes red or uncomfortable while the contact lens is in place, remove the lens immediately. If the problem continues after the lens has been removed contact the acute referral clinic. If this is not possible, contact your nearest 'A&E' department for advice.

Ask yourself these three questions, each time you wear your lenses:

- 1. Do my eyes look good?** - no redness
- 2. Do my eyes feel good in my lenses?** - no unusual discomfort
- 3. Do I see well?** - no unusual blurring

If your lens is damaged it must not be worn. If you receive your lenses from Bournemouth Hospital telephone the Contact Lens Service and a replacement lens can be ordered. This normally takes between two and four weeks depending on the type of contact lens you wear.

Useful telephone numbers:

Acute referral clinic, Bournemouth Eye Unit, Bournemouth Hospital: **0300 019 4181**

Contact Lens Service, Bournemouth Eye Unit : **0300 019 4422**

Contact lens collection

Recommended wearing time:

Solutions recommended:

Any other details:

Date:

Signature:

**The Eye Unit, The Royal Bournemouth Hospital,
Castle Lane East, Bournemouth, Dorset, BH7 7DW**

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t: 01202 303626

w: www.uhd.nhs.uk



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