

Soft 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.

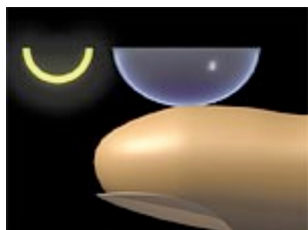
The NHS subsidises the cost of contact lenses supplied. For certain lenses there is no charge, and certain benefits exempt you from payment. Otherwise, you pay a fixed cost towards your lenses and this will be explained further when we discuss contact lens fitting with you.

The following information will hopefully help you after your contact lenses have been fitted.

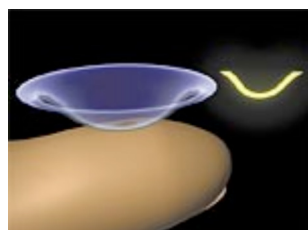
Soft contact lens insertion and removal

Before you are given your lenses you will have been shown how to insert and remove them (unless you have been fitted with 'extended wear' soft contact lenses).

Checking if your soft contact lens is the right side out

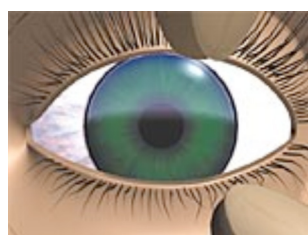


Correct



Incorrect

How to insert your contact lenses



- Wash and dry your hands before handling your lens (dry fingers help handling as soft contact lenses tend to stick to wet fingers rather than to the eye!).
- Place the lens on the tip of your index (first) finger
- Using the middle finger of your other hand, pull and hold your upper eyelid so that you cannot blink

- Pull down your lower eyelid, using the middle finger of your inserting hand
- Place the contact lens directly over the coloured part of your eye
- Slowly release your eyelid and close your eye for a moment

How to remove your contact lenses



- Wash and dry your hands
- **Make sure that your lens is actually on your eye**
- Looking up, pull down your lower eyelid with the middle finger of your inserting hand
- Bring your index finger close to your eye until you touch the lower edge of the lens
- Slide the lens down to the lower white part of your eye
- Gently squeeze the lens between your thumb and index finger and remove it from your eye (keep your nails cut short so you do not scratch your eye)
- Follow the lens care procedures recommended by your eye care practitioner

For some types of soft lenses it is necessary to use a removal technique that is more similar to that used by rigid lens wearers. If this applies to you, this removal technique will be explained to you.

Occasionally a lens can slide under the top lid. All you have to do is pull the upper lid up, put your finger on the lens and slide it back into place. Very rarely the lens will get folded and lodge right at the very top under the lid. If this happens, look as far down as you can and pull the top lid up as far as you can.

Attempt to push the lens down using your upper lid. If it will not move and your eye is sore contact the acute referral clinic. If your eye feels okay, wait a while to see if the lens will work itself down. If you are still unable to remove the lens contact the acute referral clinic so we can arrange to see you to remove the lens: **0300 019 4181**.

Although soft lenses are normally comfortable you will still need to let your eye get used to them gradually. Before you leave the eye unit with your lenses you will have been advised of the maximum time your lenses can be worn each day. 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 the lenses can be worn.

Caring for your contact lenses

The main problem for contact lens wearers comes from infection. To help prevent infection follow the instructions for wearing, cleaning and disinfecting your lenses.

Soft 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 (at least every three months). Make sure you buy a lens case that is suitable to use with your particular cleaning and disinfecting solutions.

Enzyme Cleaning: some people need an enzyme cleaner to help remove built-up protein from their lens. You will be advised if this applies to you.

Storage: soft lenses that have been worn should be disposed of when you start to wear a new lens (except some cosmetic lenses which are returned for re-opaquing).

Ongoing Care: while some soft lenses can last up to a year, this varies. Many soft lenses are replaced on a regular basis e.g. three monthly. It is important to have the lens checked on your eye at least once a year. This check will assure that the health of the eye, the fit of the lens, and the power of the lens, are all correct.

Other important points

- Do not wear your lenses in a hot-tub or for swimming
- Remove your lenses before sleeping (unless overnight wear has been prescribed)
- 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 optometrist 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 a 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** (answerphone)

Contact lens collection

Recommended wearing time:

Solutions recommended:

Any other details:

Date:

Signature:

**The Eye Unit, The Royal Bournemouth Hospital,
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