

Allergies? You Can Still Wear Contact Lenses!

Allergies and contact lens wear

If you're allergic to pollen, mold, dust mites or pet dander, you know how uncomfortable they can make wearing your contact lenses. And if you have seasonal allergies, the sneezing, coughing and red, itchy eyes you experience can make contact wear seem almost impossible.

Don't give up just yet. There are several things you can do to continue wearing your contact lenses, even during allergy season.

Tips for reducing allergy-related symptoms

If you have allergies and wear contact lenses, here are a few simple tips that could help lessen, and sometimes even prevent, allergy-related symptoms:

- Avoid touching or rubbing your eyes
- Wash your hands often with soap and water
- Wash your bed linens and pillowcases in hot water and detergent regularly
- Avoid wearing eye makeup
- Never share your contact lenses or contact lens cases with someone else

If these suggestions don't seem to make much difference, talk to your eye care practitioner about:

- Switching to daily disposable contact lenses
- Changing your contact lens cleaning and disinfecting system
- Prescription or over-the-counter eye drops that can help relieve your allergy-related symptoms (You should not put these kinds of drops in while wearing your lenses, but you can put in drops, wait several minutes and then apply your lenses.)

While oral antihistamines can help relieve allergy-related symptoms, like sneezing and runny nose, they can actually make your eye symptoms worse by reducing the quantity or quality of your tears.

Also, be sure to have your eyes examined once a year. Depending on your eye health and the severity of your allergy-related symptoms, your eye care practitioner may recommend more frequent visits.

Lens care instructions

How you care for your contact lenses can also have an effect on your eyes during allergy season. Daily disposable lenses, which do not require lens care, are often the best option. If daily disposable lenses are not an option for you, talk to your eye care practitioner about:

- Changing your contact lens cleaning and disinfecting system
- The possibility you have a sensitivity to ingredients in your lens care solution
- Whether or not protein deposits and other debris have accumulated on your lenses

Eye drops

Using artificial tears or rewetting drops may help temporarily relieve your allergy-related symptoms. However, be sure to check with your eye care practitioner for his or her recommendation because not all of these solutions are compatible with contact lenses.

Daily disposable contact lenses

Daily disposable contact lenses can be a great option because the allergens that build up on the lens during the day are tossed away each evening and you put in a fresh, clean pair of lenses the next morning.

If your allergy-related symptoms are making contact lens wear challenging, ask your eye care practitioner if daily disposable contact lenses may be right for you.

