

Do You Sleep in Your Contact Lenses?

Contact lenses approved for overnight wear

Many contact lens wearers would like to enjoy the advantages of waking up each day to clear vision. However, there are risks and benefits of contact lens wear and the risks of serious eye problems is greater when sleeping in lenses (i.e., extended or continuous wear) as compared to only wearing contact lenses while awake (i.e., daily wear). Contact lenses are a prescription medical device and they should only be worn for sleeping if prescribed by an eye care practitioner. It is important to know that not all contact lenses are approved for wear during sleep (overnight wear and/or napping) and not everyone can sleep in contact lenses. In addition, the approved extended wear period is not the same for all contact lenses. Depending on the type of lens, the approval may be for:

- Extended wear for up to six (6) continuous nights, or
- Extended wear for up to twenty-nine nights (29) or thirty (30) continuous nights

In between wear periods rest your eyes for at least one overnight without lens wear. Depending on the brand prescribed and many factors related to your eye health, your eye care practitioner will determine how many nights in a row you can wear your contact lenses. Before you sleep in your contact lenses, be sure to ask your eye care practitioner about the risks and benefits of sleeping in lenses, if overnight wear is right for you and if you have the right kind of contact lenses. Make sure you follow his or her directions and the manufacturer's instructions for use of the lenses that are prescribed for you.

Features of newer technology silicone hydrogel lenses

Newer-technology continuous wear contact lenses are made of silicone hydrogel, a material that allows much more oxygen to reach the eyes than older-technology soft contact lenses.

Without adequate oxygen, the eyes can develop signs and symptoms of corneal oxygen deficiency, such as redness, blurred vision, end-of-day discomfort and dryness. Silicone hydrogel lenses have high oxygen transmissibility so oxygen flows continuously through the lenses.

Modern extended/continuous wear contact lenses are designed for frequent replacement. Typical recommended replacement intervals are between one week and one month. Frequent replacement helps to prevent deposits from building up on your lenses which is important as deposits can cause eye irritation.

Proper care for best results

Because there is a greater risk of complications from sleeping in contact lenses, be sure to ask your eye care practitioner how often you need to replace and properly care for your lenses. And always be sure to follow directions regarding how to wear, care for and when to replace your lenses. While wearing contact lenses be sure to check your eyes regularly to make sure they look good, feel well and vision is clear.

A no-surgery option

Contact lenses approved for extended/continuous wear may be a good alternative to vision correction surgery such as LASIK. If you're not sure about having eye surgery or are not a good candidate talk to your eye care practitioner about this no-surgery option.

Problems?

If your eyes become red or irritated or you experience reduced vision that doesn't improve with a fresh pair of contact lenses or lens cleaning, remove your lenses and consult your eye care practitioner immediately.

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