

How to report an incident to the HPRA

If a medical device poses a risk to your health and safety, stop using it where possible and report the problem to your healthcare provider, the HPRA and the manufacturer of the device. You should report any unexpected problem or malfunction that may affect your health or cause or contribute to an injury, for example an eye irritation that your eye care specialist confirms is related to your lenses.

You can report incidents to the HPRA by filling in our online user report form on www.hpra.ie. If you would prefer to fill out a printed copy of the form, you can download it from our website or request a copy by phone or e-mail.

More information

This is one in a series of information leaflets that you can get from the HPRA and from our website: www.hpra.ie.

The Health Products Regulatory Authority (HPRA)

Our role is to protect and enhance public and animal health by regulating medicines, medical devices and other health products.

What does the HPRA do?

As the regulatory authority, we monitor the safety of all medical devices available in Ireland. Our aim is to make sure that these products do not compromise the health and safety of the patient or the person using them. We also work to ensure that medical device manufacturers comply with all safety regulations.

(The HPRA cannot provide advice on which medical devices you should buy.)



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MEDICAL DEVICES

Safety tips for contact lens wearers



OUR ADVICE ON

Safety tips for contact lens wearers

Millions of people worldwide enjoy the benefits of contact lenses. Contact lenses are medical devices that help correct a number of vision disorders, including far-sightedness (hypermetropia), near-sightedness (myopia) and astigmatism, and improve eye focusing for reading.

Most people can wear contact lenses safely. But if you don't follow the instructions for use, you can increase your risk of irritation, discomfort and eye infection.

We aim to give you information on safety points to follow when you use contact lenses and lens care products. Following these will maximise the benefits of contact lenses while keeping your eyes healthy.

General tips for contact lens users

- Under Irish law, contact lenses can only be fitted by optometrists, contact lens dispensing opticians and medical practitioners. Don't buy lenses without their professional advice. Cosmetic contact lenses are not medical devices, but they can pose the same risk to your health.
- Contact lens prescriptions are valid for a maximum of 12 months. Visit your eye care specialist regularly and always follow their advice.

- Follow the instructions that come with your lenses. If you don't have the instructions, ask your eye care specialist for a copy or look on the manufacturer's website.
- Keep the product packaging while you use the lenses, as you may need the lot (batch) number if you develop a bad reaction.
- Take the lenses out and see your eye care specialist if you get eye pain, blurred vision, swelling or unusual redness or if you think you may have an eye infection. Bring your contact lenses, lens case and solution with you.
- Ask your eye care specialist about wearing contact lenses for sports activities (especially water-based activities) to prevent injury and infection.
- Always carry a back-up pair of glasses with a current prescription in case you have problems with your contact lenses.

Top tips for lens wear

- Wear your lenses as prescribed. Your eye care specialist will recommend a wearing schedule specific to your type of lenses. Only wear your contact lenses for the time recommended.
- Wash your hands before you touch your contact lenses. Use warm water and soap and dry well. This reduces your risk of eye infections.
- Make sure your lens is facing the right way before you insert it.
- Put your lenses in before you put your make-up on. Take out your lenses before removing your make-up.
- Use aerosol sprays such as hairspray and deodorant before putting your lenses in as these can coat your lenses and cause irritation.
- Take care with face creams. Moisturising creams around the eyes may irritate contact lens users.

- If your lens looks damaged, torn or ripped, do not put it back on your eye.
- Do not put your lenses in your mouth or moisten them with saliva. Saliva is not sterile and could cause infection.
- Never wear another person's contact lenses.
- Do not sleep with your contacts in unless your eye specialist tells you to.

Top tips for lens solution and storage

- Clean and store your contact lenses as prescribed. Different types of lenses require special care and certain products. Always use the products recommended by your eye care specialist.
- Only use fresh solution to clean and store lenses. Never re-use old solution.
- Change the lens solution when the manufacturer recommends, even if you do not use your lenses every day.
- If you use a case for storing your lenses, clean it regularly according to your eye specialist's recommendations. Wash your hands before you clean your case. Not cleaning lens storage cases is a major source of infection.
- Never use tap or distilled water or any homemade saline solution to clean or store lenses. These are not sterile and can lead to severe infections.
- Don't transfer contact lens solutions into smaller travel size containers. This can affect the sterility of the solution. This can also put you at risk of accidentally using a solution not intended for your eyes.
- Don't let the top of the lens solution bottle touch anything. Keep the lid tightly closed when not in use.
- Don't switch your type of solution without asking your eye care specialist.