

# Advice if you wear rigid contact lenses

Helpful guidance and tips for wearing and maintaining your rigid contact lenses.

## What are rigid contact lenses?

Rigid gas-permeable (RGP) lenses are made of a material that allows oxygen to pass through and reach the surface of your eye. They provide good vision correction and often work well with astigmatism and other irregular shaped eyes. They are easy to handle and care for and they last longer than soft contact lenses.



## Hygiene

There is a small increased risk of developing eye infections if you wear contact lenses of any type — after all, you are putting something into your eye. Before touching your eyes or contact lenses, thoroughly wash and dry your hands. By paying careful attention to hygiene, and having regular check-ups, you can make sure that you keep the risk of infection as low as possible.



## Inserting lenses

Check the lens is not damaged. Smear a drop of wetting solution on both sides of the lens. Use a finger from one hand to hold your lower lid and a finger from the other hand on the upper lid. Grip the lids under the eyelashes and hold the lids apart. With the lens on the tip of your finger, gently place the lens on the centre of your eye. Occasionally a lens may slip off-centre to the white of your eye. Pull the edge of your eyelid to the far side of the lens and gently move it back to the centre.



## Removing lenses

When you take your lenses out, do it somewhere where you will be able to find it easily if you drop it. Spread a cloth or towel out. Do not work over an open sink without putting the plug in. Open your eyes wide. Place one finger at the outer corner of your eye and stretch your eyelids tight, then blink. The lens will drop out, so either catch it or let it drop onto the cloth or towel.



## Cleaning lenses

You should clean the lenses every time you take them out. Apply the recommended cleaning solution to both sides of the lens and gently rub it between your fingers or in the palm of your hand. Rinse the cleaning solution off with a solution such as preserved saline solution. You may be told to use an enzyme cleaner from time to time to remove protein from the lenses.



## Disinfect the lenses

After cleaning, place the lenses in the storage case and cover them completely with fresh storage solution. You should throw the solution away when you next use the lenses. Clean the case every week using fresh storage solution, wiping out with a tissue and leaving it to air dry. Throw the case away and use a new one each time you open a new bottle of solution.



### If you wear make-up

Apply make-up after you have put your contact lenses in, and remove it after removing the contact lenses. Use non-greasy make-up and do not get any on the lenses. If you use hand cream, apply it after you have finished handling your lenses. Keep your eyes shut if you are using hairspray or a make-up fixing spray.



### Daily check

Check your eyes every day. Can you see clearly? Are your eyes red? Are the lenses comfortable? If your eyes feel tired, remove the lenses early. Do not continue to wear contact lenses that are uncomfortable, and get advice from your optometrist or optician.

## Top tips if you wear contact lenses

- ✓ Good lens wear and care is essential to prevent avoidable eye problems. Wash your hands and dry them thoroughly before using any type of contact lens and follow all the recommended procedures.
- ✓ Never use tap water to clean lenses — this could lead to serious problems, including corneal ulcers and eye infections. Follow the manufacturer's directions for cleaning, disinfecting and wearing the lenses.
- ✓ Don't change how you clean your contact lenses without asking your optometrist or optician first.
- ✓ Replace your contact lens case regularly to reduce the risk of infection and always use fresh solution to store your lenses.
- ✓ You shouldn't wear your lenses for longer than you have been told by your optometrist, and certainly not for more than 16 hours in a day. You should never sleep in them unless they are specifically designed for overnight wear.
- ✓ Don't bathe or go swimming in your contact lenses unless advised you can by your eye care practitioner.
- ✓ Never share or swap contact lenses with anyone else.
- ✓ If you wear eye make-up, always apply it after putting your contact lenses in.
- ✓ Go to regular after-care appointments with your optometrist — at least once a year or more often if your optometrist recommends it, or if you have problems.
- ✓ If in doubt, take them out. If you experience any signs of redness, pain or loss of vision — consult your optometrist or optician immediately for advice.



### About the AOP

The Association of Optometrists (AOP) is the voice of the optical profession, representing over 80% of practising optometrists. The AOP elevates the work of its members, safeguards their interests, and champions eye health across the UK. For more information, visit [www.aop.org.uk](http://www.aop.org.uk)