



A CUP OF HEALTH WITH CDC

Proper Lens Care

Risk Behaviors for Contact Lens-Related Eye Infections among Adults and Adolescents – United States, 2016

Recorded: August 15, 2017; posted: August 17, 2017

[Announcer] This program is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

[Dr. Kathleen Dooling] Welcome to *A Cup of Health with CDC*, a weekly feature of the *MMWR*, the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. I'm your host, Dr. Kathleen Dooling.

Wearing contact lenses is a convenient way to improve vision without having to wear glasses. But unlike glasses, improper care and maintenance of lenses can result in severe eye problems, including blindness.

Dr. Jennifer Cope is a researcher with CDC's National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases. She's joining us today to discuss the importance of proper lens hygiene and maintenance. Welcome to the show, Jennifer.

[Dr. Cope] Thank you for having me.

[Dr. Dooling] Jennifer, how common is contact lens use in the U.S.?

[Dr. Cope] There are approximately 45 million contact lens wearers in the United States.

[Dr. Dooling] What are the benefits of lenses over traditional glasses?

[Dr. Cope] There are a few reasons why some people choose to wear contact lenses for vision correction. Some just feel they look better without glasses and others participate in sports or other activities where it's more comfortable or convenient to not have to wear glasses.

[Dr. Dooling] What are some of the common mistakes people make, with respect to lens wear and care?

[Dr. Cope] Common mistakes include not replacing the lens storage case regularly, sleeping in contact lenses, exposing contact lenses to water, and topping off solution in the case, which means adding new solution to old solution in the lens case instead of emptying and cleaning the case before adding new solution.

[Dr. Dooling] What problems can be caused by poor lens hygiene?

[Dr. Cope] Poor contact lens hygiene can lead to a serious eye infection called microbial keratitis. This type of infection can lead to blindness or the need for a corneal transplant.

[Dr. Dooling] What are some symptoms of improper maintenance of lenses?

[Dr. Cope] Some early symptoms of a possible contact lens-related eye infection include redness and pain in the eye. If you experience these symptoms, remove your contact lenses and see your eye doctor if the symptoms do not go away.

[Dr. Dooling] Give our listeners some advice on how to properly take care of their lenses.

[Dr. Cope] Don't sleep in contact lenses, unless prescribed by your eye doctor; keep contact lenses away from all water; replace your contact lens case regularly; and don't top off or add new contact lens solution to old solution that has been sitting in the case.

[Dr. Dooling] Where can listeners get more information about caring for contact lenses?

[Dr. Cope] Listeners can go to [cdc.gov/contact lenses](http://cdc.gov/contact_lenses).

[Dr. Dooling] Thanks, Jennifer. I've been talking today with Dr. Jennifer Cope about the importance of properly maintaining contact lenses.

Improper wear and care habits put many people at risk for an eye infection. Proper lens hygiene can ensure improved vision and prevent potential eye problems associated with wearing lenses.

Until next time, be well. This is Dr. Kathleen Dooling for *A Cup of Health with CDC*.

[Announcer] For the most accurate health information, visit www.cdc.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO.