



A CUP OF HEALTH WITH CDC

Contact Lens Safety

Contact Lens Health Week — August 22-26, 2016

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

[Dr. Gaynes] 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. Robert Gaynes.

Contact lenses are a convenient and effective alternative to traditional eye glasses, but improper care and use can result in severe damage to the eyes.

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 care and use of contact lenses. Welcome to the show, Jennifer.

[Dr. Cope] Thank you.

[Dr. Gaynes] Jennifer, how many Americans wear contact lenses?

[Dr. Cope] There are about 41 million Americans who wear contact lenses to correct their vision.

[Dr. Gaynes] What kinds of eye problems can be caused by improper care and use of lenses?

[Dr. Cope] There are a range of problems, something as simple as a red eye. But there are more serious infections, like keratitis which is an infection of the cornea, or the outer clear dome of the eye.

[Dr. Gaynes] Is keratitis a big problem in the U.S.?

[Dr. Cope] Well, we've estimated that there are almost one million visits to emergency departments and clinics every year in the U.S. for keratitis.

[Dr. Gaynes] Give our listeners some tips for avoiding lens-related eye problems.

[Dr. Cope] Sure. There's a few simple things that contact lens wearers can do to prevent eye infections. First, don't sleep in your contact lenses without discussing it first with your eye doctor. Second, don't "top off" or add new contact lens solution to old solution that's been sitting in the case. And finally, do replace your contact lenses as often as recommended by your eye doctor.

[Dr. Gaynes] Jennifer, how often should a person visit their eye doctor?

[Dr. Cope] They should see their eye doctor at least once a year.

[Dr. Gaynes] And where can listeners get more information about contact lens safety?

[Dr. Cope] Listeners can go to cdc.gov/contactlenses.

[Dr. Gaynes] Thanks, Jennifer. I've been talking today with CDC's Dr. Jennifer Cope about ways to avoid contact-lens related eye problems.

Lens wearers: Visit your eye doctor at least once a year. You can help prevent most lens-related eye infections by practicing good hygiene and following your eye doctor's instructions.

Until next time, be well. This is Dr. Robert Gaynes for A Cup of Health with CDC.

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