# A CUP OF HEALTH WITH CDC

## *Keep Contacts Clean*

*Contact Lens Health Week — November 17-21, 2014*
Recorded: November 18, 2014; posted: November 20, 2014

*[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 can be a comfortable and convenient alternative to traditional eye glasses, but without proper care, they can cause severe eye problems.
Sarah Collier 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 maintenance of contact lenses. Welcome to the show, Sarah.

[Ms. Collier] Thank you, it's my pleasure to be here.

[Dr. Gaynes] Sarah, what health risks are associated with wearing contact lenses?

[Ms. Collier] Contact lenses are great way to see clearly without glasses, but if they're not cared for properly, you can run the risk of infection. And most importantly you can run the risk of infection of the cornea, which is the clear part of the eye and that's known as keratitis. In the worst-case scenario keratitis can result in vision loss if not treated promptly. Keratitis results in almost 1,000,000 doctors' visits every year.

[Dr. Gaynes] What are the symptoms of an eye infection associated with contact lenses?

[Ms. Collier] If you find that you have any eye irritation or red eyes, any sensitivity to light, lots of tearing up or watery eyes, and most importantly if you have any eye pain, you want to take out your lens right away and call your eye care provider.

[Dr. Gaynes] What are some ways to prevent eye infections when using contact lenses?

[Ms. Collier] Of course you want to wash your hands before putting your contact lenses in, but one thing that most people don't think about is the case that they store their lenses in. So it's really important to, after putting your lenses in, empty out the case, wipe it out with a clean tissue, let it air dry and then after taking your lenses out at the end of your day, fill it up with clean disinfecting solution. It's also really important to replace your case every three months and to avoid sleeping in your contact lenses unless you are told to do so by your eye care provider.

[Dr. Gaynes] How long can a person safely wear contact lenses without removing them?

[Ms. Collier] It all depends on the type of lens that you have. For example, daily disposables, you really do want to dispose of them at the end of the day after you've worn them, and avoid putting them back in. For the two week disposables you really do want to dispose of them after two weeks and not try and stretch it out to three weeks or to a month. So no matter what kind of lenses that you wear, what's most important is that you followed the directions of your eye care provider.


[Dr. Gaynes] Where can listeners get more information about contract lens safety?

[Ms. Collier] Listeners can go to CDC.gov/contactlenses all one word for more information.

[Dr. Gaynes] Thanks, Sarah. [PAUSE]
I've been talking today with CDC's Sarah Collier about the importance of keeping contact lenses clean.

Remember: If you are a contact lens wearer, you can lower their risk of getting keratitis by emptying their contact lens case and refilling it with new disinfecting solution every day, replacing the case every three months, and never sleeping in contact lenses unless otherwise directed by an eye care provider.

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.*