



# Contact Lenses

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

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## Q ARE CONTACT LENSES OR SPECS BETTER FOR SPORT?

A Contact lenses can be great for sport. They offer a wider field of vision, stay in place even when you are active, and cut the risk of injuries from a regular spectacle frame. You can also wear contact lenses in combination with sunglasses or sports goggles. If contact lenses don't suit you, there are prescription inserts available for specialist sports eyewear too. Ask your dispensing optician for advice about specialist frames for sports and how they compare to contact lenses.

## Q CAN I SWIM WITH CONTACT LENSES IN?

A Contact lenses can make swimming a better experience, but you need to take care as there are all kinds of nasty bugs living in swimming pools that can take up residence in your lenses and cause eye infections. Swimming goggles can help keep water out of your eyes.

The British Contact Lens Association advises: "Never wear contact lenses for swimming – or in hot tubs or whilst showering or participating in water sports – unless wearing tight-fitting goggles over the top. After swimming – or if lenses are removed and stored whilst swimming – contact lenses should be cleaned and disinfected in fresh solution before putting them back on the eyes." Disposable lenses, which you throw away after swimming, can cut the risk.

Speak to your eyecare practitioner before swimming in contact lenses.

## Q CAN I TRY MY FRIEND'S CONTACT LENSES?

A **No!** Never use anyone else's lenses as they will not be the correct fit for your eyes. Even if your eyes have similar prescription they may be a different shape and size and wearing a poorly fitted lens can cause damage. You can also develop eye infections.

## Q CAN I USE EYE DROPS WHEN WEARING CONTACT LENSES?

A Generally speaking, if you are advised that you need eye drops you will also be told not to wear your contact lenses at the same time. The preservatives in some types of eye drops can irritate the eyes if they get into your lenses, while if you have an eye infection that you need drops for, you need to avoid wearing lenses until it is completely resolved. Ask for advice about how to avoid reinfecting yourself when you reinsert your lenses. Some drops are preservative free and compatible with contact lenses: ask your practitioner for advice before using any eye drops. If you need eye drops to keep your contact lenses feeling comfortable, then you may need a different type of lens.

## Q CAN I WASH MY LENSES IN TAP WATER?

A No. Tap water can contain bacteria that can cause sight threatening infections. Always use the solutions recommended by your practitioner.

## Q CAN I WEAR CONTACT LENSES DAY AND NIGHT? CAN I SLEEP IN MY LENSES?

A Some contact lenses can be worn at night, but not all types of lenses. If this is important to you, talk to your practitioner first as they may suggest a different type of lens to the one you are wearing. Never sleep in your lenses without advice from a professional as the wrong type of lenses worn overnight can deprive your eyes of oxygen and increase the risk of eye infections.

## Q CAN I WEAR MAKE-UP WHEN I WEAR MY CONTACT LENSES?

A Yes. It's often easier to put in your contact lenses before putting on make-up. Be careful not to get make up in your eyes as this can make the lenses, and your vision, smeary. Make sure you replace your eye make up every few months as bacteria can grow in make-up and cause eye infections. Never share eye make-up. If you have sensitive eyes look out for low allergy make up and avoid mascara with fibres that may irritate your eyes.

## Q CAN I WEAR MY CONTACT LENSES IN THE SHOWER?

A You can wear your contact lenses in the shower if you avoid getting your eyes wet. Tap water can contain a bacteria that causes sight threatening eye infections. If you are concerned, shower first, then insert your lenses.

## Q CAN I WEAR MY CONTACT LENSES ON AN AIRPLANE?

A The air in a plane is air conditioned and may make your eyes feel dry. You can wear lenses, but make sure you have your specs with you and remove your lenses if they feel uncomfortable. A longer flight is more likely to cause problems. Lubricating eye drops, specially designed for contact lens wearers can also help.

## Q HOW DO I LOOK AFTER MY LENSES?

A The most common lenses fitted today are soft daily disposable lenses which you wear once and throw away. If you wear soft lenses and replace them less often you'll need to clean them every night, which is also the case for gas permeable lenses. Lenses need to be soaked in the recommended contact lens solution overnight, to ensure that bacteria don't contaminate the lens. You may also be recommended to use an enzyme cleaner with some sorts of lenses, every week or so depending on the type of lenses you wear.