

COVID-19 Contact Lenses Behavioural Optometrist Children Eye Care Clinic Sydney

Study Debunks Claims That Contact Lenses Up Risk of COVID-19

Study Debunks Claims That Contact Lenses Up Risk of COVID-19 A study carried out to determine the validity of recent reports suggesting contact lenses could increase the chances of healthy wearers being infected with Covid-19, has found no evidence that that is true. The study instead concluded that if there is a threat of any sort it is more likely to lie in careless hygiene on the part of the user, and not in the lenses themselves. And it does say that contact lenses should not be worn by those already infected with the virus.

Australia's Fellow of the International Academy of Orthokeratology and Myopia Control (FIAOMC), optometrist Gary Rodney, welcomed the results of the study co-authored by professor and ocular microbiologist Mark Wilcox from NSW University and academics from Canada and the UK. He said the risk rumours had added unnecessary panic and confusion to a situation already swamped with more than enough of both.

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He said the study also dispels the idea that wearing spectacles instead is any safer than contacts with regard to lessening the likelihood of contracting coronavirus. However, as is the case with any illness such as flu or a cold, it's best for anyone with already active Covid-19 to switch to glasses instead of contacts.

Extra Attention to Hygiene Needed

Rodney said while the standard rules currently set for helping to prevent infection (social distancing, washing hands regularly, and avoiding touching the face, mouth, nose or eyes) remained the same for those wearing contact lenses. They would, however, have to be even more careful as they would be certain to touch the lenses themselves when cleaning them, and highly likely to touch one of the no-go areas of their face while inserting and removing the lenses.

He said optometrists always stressed the importance of hygiene with regard to contact lenses, but now had to be even more careful to point out its extra importance the virus spreading so easily and quickly.

The Do's and Don'ts of Self and Lens Care

Use soap and water for the 20 second hand wash before inserting or removing contact lenses. It's best to avoid hand sanitisers with high alcohol content, Rodney said, as the alcohol in them could burn the eyes. Instead dry your hands with a clean paper towel if possible, or if that's not available, use a clean towel which has not been used by other members of the family.

Stick to the replacement schedule. While partial and full lockdowns are the order of the day at present because of the pandemic, optometry is an essential service in Australia and many eye doctors, including those at the Smart Vision outlets in Sydney, have made plans to service their patients as well and as safely as they can.

Lenses should only be used within their stated time frame, whether that's a day, a fortnight, or a month, and discarded as soon as they expire. If you're running low on lenses, contact your eye doctor and see if you can have lenses delivered to your door. Lens cases should also be thrown away and replaced every month as they are hard to clean properly, and can amass significant amounts of bacteria.

Disinfect the lenses as well as your hands. Rodney warns that saline solution won't do the trick as it's not a disinfectant, and water should never touch the lenses or their cases, as it can carry germs which might cause eye infection. Using only the disinfectant that your eye doctor has prescribed, clean them in their case overnight.

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Be sure to discard the previous night's solution in the morning and replace it with a new solution before you return them to the case at night. While it might not be generally advised during "normal" times, Rodney suggests rubbing the lenses gently with lens cleaner before placing them in the disinfectant during these anything but normal times.

For more information on caring for yourself and your contact lenses, or to learn more about how Smart Vision is making as many of its services available as possible during the pandemic, visit the Smart Vision website: Optometrists Sydney: Optometry Services For Children and Adults | Smart Vision to find more information provided by the Smart Vision behavioural optometrists whose major focus is on the effects of perceptual and functional vision problems in children.

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