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## NEWS RELEASE

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## Contact Lens Health Week Promotes Healthy Contact Lens Wear and Care

*American Academy of Ophthalmology and American Academy of Optometry join the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to promote healthy contact lens habits to protect sight*

SAN FRANCISCO and ORLANDO, Fla. – August 14, 2017 – The American Academy of Ophthalmology and the American Academy of Optometry have joined the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and its other partners to promote Contact Lens Health Week, August 21-25. This year's campaign theme is "Healthy Habits Mean Healthy Eyes." These organizations are encouraging youth to start healthy habits early to help ensure a lifetime of healthy vision.

Contact lenses provide safe and effective vision correction for an estimated 40 million Americans. However, contact lens wearers risk infection if they fail to wear, clean, disinfect, and store their contact lenses as directed. Even non-sight threatening infections or inflammation can be painful and disrupt day-to-day life. Good hygiene, proper contact lens care, and regular follow-up care with your eye care professional are all essential to keeping your eyes healthy.

Eye care providers encourage patients to follow these guidelines for healthy contact lens wear<sup>1</sup>:

- **Wash your hands with soap and water.** Dry them well with a clean cloth before touching your contact lenses every time.
- **Don't sleep in your contact lenses,** unless prescribed by your eye doctor.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/contactlenses/protect-your-eyes.html>

- **Keep water away from your contact lenses.** Avoid showering in contact lenses, and remove them before using a hot tub or swimming.
- **Don't "top off" solution.** Use only fresh contact lens disinfecting solution – never mix fresh solution with old or used solution.
- **Replace your contact lens case at least once every three months.** Rub and rinse your contact lens case with contact lens solution (never water) and empty and dry with a clean tissue paper. Store upside down with the caps off after each use.
- **Give your eyes a rest.** The cornea, the transparent tissue covering each eye, gets deprived of oxygen from being covered up all day by a contact lens. Starved for air, the cornea starts growing new blood vessels to compensate for the lack of oxygen. Over-wearing contact lenses can lead to problems such as eye inflammation and lipid deposits in the cornea, which can affect vision. Over-wearing can also increase the risk of infection.
- **Sterilize the night before planned wear, if you wear contact lenses sporadically.** Disinfecting solutions lose their efficacy over time, leading to microbial overgrowth in the case and on the lens.
- **Decorative lenses must be prescribed and fitted by an eye care professional.** Colored contact lenses and Halloween-inspired designs are not costume jewelry. They require a prescription, just like regular contact lenses. Follow the same hygiene rules as regular contact lenses. Never use lenses that have not been approved by the FDA.

“Visit your eye care professional yearly or as often as he/she recommends,” said Thomas Steinemann, M.D., clinical spokesperson for the American Academy of Ophthalmology. “Ask him or her about how to care for your contact lenses, and remove your contact lenses immediately and call your doctor promptly if you have eye pain, discomfort, redness or blurred vision.”

“While we focus on Contact Lens Health Week, it is important to remember that both patients and prescribers alike should maintain a year-round vigilance regarding eye health. Nothing improves the safety of contact lens wear like the continual reinforcement of and compliance with proper lens wear, proper lens care, and proper patient follow up,” says Clarke D. Newman, OD, FAAO, Chair of the American Academy of Optometry’s Section on Cornea, Contact Lenses and Refractive Technologies.

The CDC is hosting a Twitter Chat on **Tuesday, August 22, 2017**. The twitter handle, @CDCgov will co-host an hour-long chat with @NBCNewsHealth from 12-1pm (ET), using the hashtag #HealthyContactsChat.

For more information on Contact Lens Health Week and other resources about healthy contact lens wear and care throughout the year, visit [www.cdc.gov/contactlenses](http://www.cdc.gov/contactlenses).

### **About the American Academy of Ophthalmology**

The American Academy of Ophthalmology is the world's largest association of eye physicians and surgeons. A global community of 32,000 medical doctors, we protect sight and empower lives by setting the standards for ophthalmic education and advocating for our patients and the public. We innovate to advance our profession and to ensure the delivery of the highest-quality eye care. For more information, visit [aao.org](http://aao.org).

### **About the American Academy of Optometry**

The American Academy of Optometry enhances excellence in optometric practice by fostering research and disseminating knowledge in vision science through its journal, *Optometry and Vision Science*, and the continuing education presented at its annual meeting. Fellows of the Academy are committed to the premise that learning is a lifelong obligation of a professional, as is the commitment to expand the profession's knowledge base through ongoing fellowship and exchange. For more information, visit [www.aaopt.org](http://www.aaopt.org).

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