

Purchase Factors Drive Online Contact Lens Searches, According to New U.S. & Canadian Research

Latest Contact Lens Institute See Tomorrow Data Probes Consumer Digital Habits; Reveals Need for Elevated Contact Lens Removal Education and Dual Wear Conversations

WASHINGTON, D.C., February 19, 2025—New research from the [Contact Lens Institute \(CLI\)](#) indicates that purchase factors are the primary driver of consumer online contact lens-related searches in the U.S. and Canada, representing 65% of top 20 query volumes. The latest installment of CLI's [See Tomorrow initiative](#) also suggests there is considerable need to enhance patient education specific to contact lens removal, as well as to amplify discussions surrounding dual wear, i.e., patients situationally shifting between contact lenses and glasses.

The initial findings from the *Digital Discovery: Consumer Searches Reveal Contact Lens Realities* study are being shared during [Vision Expo East](#) in Orlando this week. Additional data and insights are expected to be made public over the coming months.

“Since 2021, our *See Tomorrow* program has unearthed a range of information about current and prospective contact lens wearers, all of which can help the eye care community deliver a better patient experience and elevate practice success,” said [Stan Rogaski, CLI’s executive director](#). “Heading into 2025, we’ve turned our attention to consumer perceptions and needs as revealed through their online search habits—a window into what they are thinking yet may not be telling their eye doctors, opticians, and staff.”

Among the **top 20 contact lens-related searches on Google**, 10 were purchase oriented, representing 65% of total volume. Of those, five pertained to specific contact lens retailers (53.5% by volume) and four pertained to price (9.75% by volume). That prevalence implies that practices may benefit from proactively discussing purchase dynamics ahead of and during exams, not waiting until a patient reaches the optical center. This includes price-performance alternatives and total cost—elements that [prior CLI research](#) found were important to current wearers.

CLI also reported that consumers online are **seeking help removing their contact lenses** at least twice as often as insertion. The topic was the second-highest ranked “how to” contact lens search on Google (26.3% by volume) and the first-and third-highest ranked search on TikTok (61% by volume). Over a two-month span, Google searches about removal outpaced searches about insertion by 250% to 400%, and this was consistent among both U.S. and Canadian consumers. The findings suggest that additional emphasis on removal techniques may be warranted during in-office I&R training, as well as pointedly asking about removal challenges during post-fit check-ins.

The third topic shared by CLI focused on **unfulfilled dual wear opportunities**, which the organization [quantified in 2023 as representing 36% of all patients](#). Analysis of top 20 comparative searches on Google for contact lenses finds that 80% use an “or” conjunction, in contrast to 14% for “vs” and 6% for “and”—with the vast majority of contact lens comparisons being made to glasses/spectacles (94%) as opposed to LASIK (6%). Shifting that perspective may be aided if practices develop more intentional processes to prompt dual wear conversations during exams, as well as during ongoing communications with patients between visits.

On Friday, February 21, at 10 a.m. ET on the **Vision Expo East Main Stage**, CLI will host a review of its most recent data. The [Digital Discovery: Consumer Searches Reveal Contact Lens Realities panel](#) features 2025 CLI Visionaries Roxanne Achong-Coan OD, FAAO, FIAOMC, FSLs, Dip CCLRT, of Coan Eye Care and Optical Boutique in Ocoee, Fla.; Ryan Corte, OD, of Northlake Eye in Charlotte and Asheville, N.C.; and Nishan Pressley, OD, of Essential Eyecare & Optical in Apopka, Fla., moderated by Charissa Lee, OD, MBA, FAAO, the 2025 CLI Board chairperson.

CLI conducted the digital search research using Google “contact lenses” auto-complete results for U.S. and Canada, and TikTok auto-complete results in English, sourced via AnswerThePublic.com, with data collected weekly from January 3-31, 2025. Auto-complete suggestions employ language, location, and trending user behaviors to suggest the most searched phrases over the past several weeks. In addition, CLI analyzed Google Trends data for December 1, 2024, to January 31, 2025. Google Trends reports relative rankings of search terms over a defined period, using completed user behaviors, plus rank-ordered related topics and searches from the same user sample.

The Contact Lens Institute advances the latest innovations in safe and effective contact lens and lens care products and services that provide unique benefits to patients while satisfying the evolving needs of eye care professionals. CLI undertakes activities that properly assess, enhance, promote and balance contact lens and lens care industry welfare and growth, including the safe use of products in the marketplace. Its members include Alcon, Bausch + Lomb, CooperVision, and Johnson & Johnson Vision. For more information, visit contactlensinstitute.org.



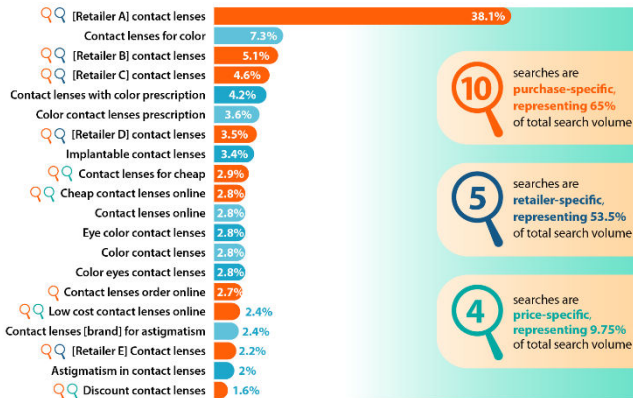
Purchasing Questions Dominate Contact Lens Digital Searches



When it comes to **searching about contact lenses online**, U.S. and Canadian residents are predominantly looking for topics related to **purchase**, including **retail availability** and **cost**.



top 20 contact lens-related searches



Google "contact lenses" auto-complete results for U.S. and Canada sourced via AnswerThePublic.com; collected weekly from January 3 - 31, 2025.

eye care provider considerations



Patients may be using their phones in the exam lane to search for contact lens purchase options. Consider ways to proactively discuss possibilities ahead of and during patients' exams, including price-performance alternatives and total cost.



Explain your goal of providing the best possible contact lens wearing experience while ensuring patients are always treated fairly.



Don't assume patients understand how they can easily purchase contact lenses through you or others, including rebates, payment plans, personal service, convenient delivery or pick-up, and additional benefits of working with your practice.



Patients Want Contact Lens Removal Guidance



A review of **consumer search trends** indicates that people are seeking help with contact lens removal at least twice as much as insertion, suggesting opportunities for greater education and knowledge sharing to improve the wearing experience.



Google

among "how..." questions relating to contact lenses, removal ranks #2, representing 26% of search volumes.



TikTok

among "how..." questions relating to contact lenses, removal ranks #1, representing 61% of search volumes.



Google Trends

Contact lens removal searches outpace insertion searches 2.5x to 4x.



Google "contact lenses" auto-complete results for U.S. and Canada, and TikTok auto-complete results in English; sourced via AnswerThePublic.com; collected weekly from January 3 - 31, 2025; Google Trends U.S. and Canada data for December 1, 2024 - January 31, 2025; accessed February 2, 2024.

eye care provider considerations



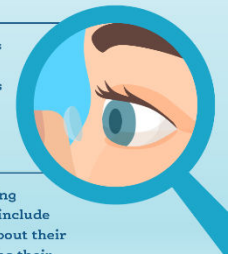
CLI's "Disrupting Dropout" report (2024) found that 63% of new contact lens patients felt understanding insertion and removal was key to continuing wear.



Additional emphasis on contact lens removal may be warranted during new wearer in-office I&R training, as well as send-home tips to minimize their reliance on "Dr. Google / Dr. TikTok" for post-visit guidance.



Check-ins with new wearers following their initial and/or new fits should include active listening-geared questions about their ability to and confidence in removing their contact lenses.





Acquiring Digital Search Data

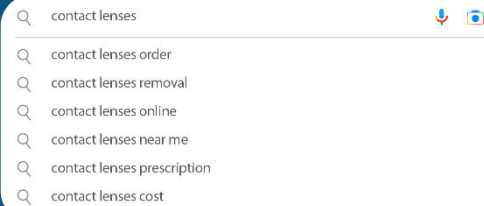


Consumer digital search behaviors provide a window into interests, intentions, and attitudes on a significant scale, including contact lens related opportunities and concerns they may not voice to eye care providers. The Contact Lens Institute tapped into the following resources to gain directional insights.

predictive searches



Analysis of auto-complete suggestions, which employ language, location, and trending user behaviors to suggest the most searched phrases over the past several weeks.



Google TikTok

Google 'contact lenses' auto-complete results for U.S. and Canada, and TikTok auto-complete results in English, sourced via AnswerThePublic.com. Data collected weekly from January 3 – 31, 2025.

completed searches



Relative rankings of search terms over a defined period, using completed user behaviors, plus rank-ordered related topics and searches from the same user sample.



Google Trends

Google Trends U.S. and Canada data for December 1, 2024 – January 31, 2025. Accessed February 2, 2024.



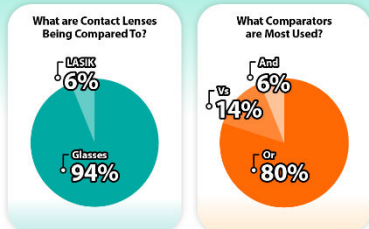
Digital Search Snapshot: Shift “Or” to “And” for Contact Lenses



Contact Lens Institute research has shown significant opportunities to prescribe both contact lenses and glasses to patients, many of whom want both. Yet consumer **digital search habits** reveal that a majority view those choices as an **“either-or” proposition**, suggesting that the eye care community should **continue to educate and advocate for dual wear**.



comparing vision correction options



Google Auto-Complete: Top 20 Comparative Contact Lens Searches by Volume



When searching for contact lenses and glasses, three of the top five rising related queries for U.S. consumers are about smart glasses (one in five in Canada).

CLI surveys say...



eye care provider considerations



There is a substantial opportunity and patient desire to offer both contact lenses and glasses – i.e., dual wear.



Shifting the perspective from “or” to “and” may benefit from more intentional processes and conversations within practices about dual wear.



The increasing availability of and consumer intrigue about smart glasses presents an additional avenue to engage in a dual wear discussion.



Google 'contact lenses' auto-complete results for U.S. and Canada sourced via AnswerThePublic.com; collected weekly from January 3 – 31, 2025.
Google Trends U.S. and Canada data for December 1, 2024 – January 31, 2025; accessed February 2, 2024.