



CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF OPTOMETRISTS
ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE DES OPTOMÉTRISTES



Canadian Ophthalmological Society
Société canadienne d'ophtalmologie
EYE PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS OF CANADA
MÉDECINS ET CHIRURGIENS OPHTALMOLOGISTES DU CANADA



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Canada's eye care professionals warn of cosmetic contact lens risks ahead of Halloween

Cosmetic lenses are medical devices, not costume accessories, and improper use can cause serious eye injury and permanent vision loss.

OTTAWA, October 22, 2026 — As Canadians prepare for Halloween, the Canadian Ophthalmological Society (COS), the Canadian Association of Optometrists (CAO) and the Opticians Association of Canada (OAC) are reminding the public that cosmetic contact lenses can pose serious risks to eye health, even when worn for a single occasion.

Cosmetic contact lenses, also called decorative, coloured or costume lenses, change the appearance of the eyes without correcting vision. Like corrective contact lenses, they sit directly on the eye and require professional guidance on fit, use and care. Improperly fitted or handled lenses can cause scratches to the cornea, allergic reactions and infections, with complications that may threaten vision. (recalls-rappels.canada.ca)

“Even if you don’t need glasses or contact lenses to see clearly, cosmetic contact lenses are medical devices—not just another part of your costume. Before you buy, talk to your eye doctor about a prescription, a proper fit, and tips on how to wear and care for them. Lenses that fit poorly or aren’t cared for properly can cause serious infections and even permanently damage your sight,” says Dr. Allison Scott, Optometrist and President of the Canadian Association of Optometrists.

Serious risks - not just a cosmetic concern

Poor fit, improper cleaning and unsafe handling can damage the eye’s surface or introduce infection. Complications can include corneal ulcers and other serious infections that may lead to permanent vision loss. Purchasing lenses without professional guidance can also mean missing essential instructions on safe wear and care. (opto.ca)

“Cosmetic contact lenses can cause serious complications, including corneal ulcers and infections that may lead to permanent vision loss. Even a single use can put your sight at risk. If you experience redness, pain, blurred vision or sensitivity to light, remove the lenses and seek prompt assessment from an eye care professional. These symptoms should

never be ignored - early treatment can be critical to protecting your vision,” says Dr. Phil Hooper, Past President, Canadian Ophthalmological Society.

Regulated medical devices require professional guidance

Cosmetic contact lenses are regulated as Class II medical devices in Canada and must be licensed by Health Canada to be sold legally. This regulatory framework is already in effect; the transition period for industry compliance ended on July 16, 2017. Product licensing does not replace the need for appropriate fitting and instructions from an eye care professional. (canada.ca)

“Halloween is a time for creativity and fun, but eye health should never be part of the risk. Cosmetic contact lenses may seem like a harmless addition to a costume, but they are medical devices that require proper fitting, handling and care. Licensed opticians play an important role in helping Canadians wear contact lenses safely. No costume is worth putting your vision at risk,” says Claudia Rojas - President of the Opticians Association of Canada.

Protect your eyes this Halloween

Anyone considering cosmetic contact lenses should:

- Consult an eye care professional (like an optometrist, ophthalmologist or an optician) for a prescription, and have your lenses professionally fitted by a regulated eye care professional authorized to fit contact lenses in your province.
- Purchase through an authorized dispenser and use only lenses licensed by Health Canada. Be cautious when buying cosmetic contact lenses online, including from U.S. websites, even where a product is labelled “FDA approved.” FDA approval is not a Health Canada licence, and purchasing a product does not replace a prescription, professional fitting or instructions on safe use and care.
- Follow cleaning, disinfection and replacement instructions. Wash and thoroughly dry your hands before handling lenses.
- Never share contact lenses with another person.
- Do not sleep in cosmetic contact lenses. (opto.ca)

If you develop redness, blurred vision, ongoing discharge or sensitivity to light, remove the lenses immediately and promptly contact an eye care professional. Do not ignore symptoms or continue wearing the lenses. (recalls-rappels.canada.ca)

About the Canadian Association of Optometrists

The Canadian Association of Optometrists ([CAO](#)) is the national voice of optometry. As Canada's primary eye care professionals, optometrists serve as the first point of contact for Canadians seeking to protect their vision and eye health. CAO works collaboratively to advance the highest standard of primary eye care, promoting optimal vision, and eye health for all Canadians. For more information, visit [opto.ca](#).

About the Canadian Ophthalmological Society

The Canadian Ophthalmological Society ([COS](#)) is the national, recognized authority on eye and vision care in Canada. As eye physicians and surgeons, we are committed to assuring the provision of optimal medical and surgical eye care for all Canadians by promoting excellence in ophthalmology and by providing services to support our members in practice. Our membership includes over 900 ophthalmologists and 200 ophthalmology residents. For more information, visit [cos-sco.ca](#).

About the Opticians Association of Canada

The Opticians Association of Canada ([OAC](#)) is a professional association representing Licensed Opticians in Canada. Our mission is to promote Licensed Opticians and the profession; to develop and maintain a professional standard of knowledge and proficiency in our occupational field, and to educate and inform vision care consumers about matters related to their eye health. For more information, visit [opticians.ca](#).

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