

Patient information

Hard contact lenses

(Rigid gas permeable lenses)

You have been fitted with rigid gas permeable contact lenses. This sheet gives you a little more information on the correct handling of your lenses and care that is required to make you a happy contact lens wearer and to reduce your risk of eye infections.

Handling your contact lenses

Always thoroughly wash and dry your hands before you handle your lenses and make sure that your hands are free from perfumes and creams.

Handle your lenses over a clean surface and not over a sink. This is to avoid any contamination with tap water. You should always avoid any tap water near your contact lenses and case.

Be careful, as fingernails can damage the surface of a contact lens.

Always re-clean your lenses if they are dropped.

Even some experienced contact lens wearers prefer to insert and remove their

lenses by looking in the mirror and certainly when you first start wearing lenses, you should use a mirror to help you. It is quite common to have some difficulty inserting and removing your lenses when you first start wearing lenses. If this happens, don't panic. Give yourself a break and come back to it later. If you have recurring difficulties, let your contact lens practitioner know so that we can book you an appointment to go through things again.

Inserting your contact lenses

- Remove the contact lens from the case containing the Total Care storing solution.
- Check for any debris on the lens and rinse with a small amount of the solution or saline.
- Place the lens concave side upwards towards the tip of the forefinger of your dominant hand and put a little more of the Total Care storing solution on to the lens, as this will cushion the lens from the eye when it first goes in to make the lens more comfortable.
- Look down towards the floor and use the forefinger of your other hand to pull up your upper eyelid at the lashes. This is in order to prevent the blink reflex.
- Use the middle finger of your dominant hand to pull down on the lower eyelid. Then gently and carefully insert the contact lens onto the eye. You should look at the contact lens as you insert it, so that it is placed directly onto the cornea (the clear window that is in front of the coloured part of your eye).
- If the contact lens has moved onto the white part of your eye, do not panic; try and use your upper and lower lids to push the lens back onto the cornea.

- If this is not successful, remove the lens and reinsert. It is important to make sure that you are not using your fingernails at any point.
- A lens can get attached under the lids, but it is not possible to lose a contact lens at the back of your eyes.

Removing your contact lenses

There are two commonly used ways of removing RGP lenses. Follow the technique advised to you during your contact lens consultation. Try to remove your lenses over a flat surface like a table, in case the lenses pop out and you don't manage to catch them in your hands.

- **Lid manipulation technique:** Use the same technique as described when inserting your lenses to gain control of your upper and lower eyelids. Then manipulate the central part of your upper and lower eyelids in order to move the lids towards each other. The edges of your lids should then catch on the edges of the hard lens, so that the hard lens is pushed away from the eyes.
- **Scissoring' technique:** Stare wide and use your forefinger to pull up on the skin at the side of the eye where your upper and lower eyelids meet. Blink and the lens should then pop out from the eye.

Cleaning your contact lenses

Once removed from the eyes, your contact lenses need to be cleaned and disinfected. You have been advised to use Total Care daily cleaner and Total Care disinfecting and wetting solution.

To clean a lens, place it in the palm of your hands with a few drops of the Total Care

daily cleaner. Then gently rub the surfaces of the lens for about 20 seconds. This will help to get rid of any debris that may have stuck to the lens during wear.

It is then important to rinse off all remaining cleaner from the lens, as it is toxic to the eye. To do this you can either use preservative-free saline or some of your Total care storing solution. Your lenses should then be stored overnight, for at least six hours, in the storing solution before re-use. If not used again, the lenses can be kept in this solution for up to 30 days, before they need to be re-cleaned and disinfected.

You should not change your contact lens solution without first consulting us, as some solutions can interact with your lenses and your eyes in an adverse manner.

Wearing your lenses

Lenses are new to your eyes, so you should build your wearing time up gradually. You should never exceed the wearing times recommended to you by your contact lens practitioner, even if your eyes feel comfortable. Try to avoid dusty and smoky environments whilst wearing your lenses, or make sure that you are wearing suitable eye protection, as dust can get under a hard lens and cause sudden sharp pain. If this does happen, remove the lens, then rinse and reinsert it. It is best to apply make-up after you have inserted your contact lenses and to remove your contact lenses before taking make-up off. You should avoid mascaras that lengthen or thicken the lashes. Eyeliner should not be used and you should be careful when using hair spray, powder-based make-up and perfumes.

Wearing time: initial hours

Increase by up to hours

Maximum hours

If your eyes are red or painful, remove your lenses if possible. If pain or redness persists, if your vision is blurred, or if you are at all worried, please seek a prompt medical opinion. Our optometrist is available Monday - Friday 8:30am to 5:00pm:

Optometry Office: 01284 712924.

It is quite common to experience some dryness of your eyes when wearing lenses and you might be recommended lubricating drops to keep your eyes more comfortable. These should be preservative-free as preservatives can build up in the contact lens material and cause discomfort.

Key do's and don'ts for contact lens wear

Do

- Always try to handle the same lens first to avoid mix-ups. Your case should be marked right and left.
- Clean your lens case daily with a little Total Cleaner and then lots of saline and leave it to air-dry.
- Replace your case at least every three months.
- Clean and disinfect your lenses after each use.
- Replace your contact lenses as recommended by your contact lens practitioner.
- To reduce the risk of contamination, always place the lids back on solution bottles straight away after use and do not touch the tips of the solution bottles.

Don't

- Wear your lenses for longer than is recommended for your eyes, even if the lenses feel comfortable.
- Use your fingernails when handling your lenses. It is best to keep nails short if possible.
- Sleep / doze, shower or swim in your contact lenses.
- Clean your case or contact lenses with tap water, due to the risk of a serious eye infection from Acanthamoeba. You should also avoid hot tubs and fresh water when wearing the lenses.
- Store your contact lenses in saline, as this does not disinfect the lenses.
- Top up your contact lens solution in the case. It should always be completely changed after each use.

If you would like any information regarding access to the West Suffolk Hospital and its facilities please visit the website for AccessAble (the new name for DisabledGo) <https://www.accessable.co.uk/organisations/west-suffolk-nhs-foundation-trust>



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