



<https://sites.google.com/site/lasikstlouisbrintonvision/wearing-contacts-for-too-long>

Is It Safe to Wear Contacts For Too Long Here is What Experts Say



Millions of people worldwide choose contact lenses for their convenience and aesthetic appeal. But wearing contacts comes with specific instructions, including a recommended limit on how long you should keep them in. From people who fall asleep in their lenses to those who wear them from morning until late at night, stretching the wear time of contact lenses is common. But is it safe to wear contacts for too long? Eye care experts say no, and here's why.

The primary concern with prolonged contact lens wear is oxygen deprivation to the eye, specifically the cornea. Unlike most tissues in the body, the cornea does not have blood vessels to supply it with oxygen. Instead, it relies on oxygen absorbed directly from the air. Contact lenses naturally reduce the amount of oxygen that reaches the cornea, even those made from breathable, high-quality materials. Wearing lenses longer than recommended restricts oxygen further, creating a condition known as corneal hypoxia. Over time, oxygen deprivation can damage the corneal cells, leading to symptoms such as redness, irritation, blurry vision, and, in severe cases, corneal swelling. Experts caution that if this damage becomes long-term, it can affect vision permanently.

Another risk of extended contact lens wear is an increased chance of eye infections. The eye is particularly susceptible to bacterial, viral, and fungal infections, all of which can thrive on contact lenses if not handled properly. Without proper cleaning and adherence to wear times, contacts can become a perfect environment for bacteria. Eye infections like keratitis, an inflammation of the cornea, can be caused by bacteria trapped on the lens surface. Left untreated, keratitis and other infections can damage the corneal tissue and even lead to blindness. Studies show that the likelihood of infections goes up significantly when contacts are worn continuously for days at a time or slept in, which is why experts recommend following daily cleaning routines and strictly adhering to the prescribed wearing time.

Another complication that can arise from wearing contacts for too long is the risk of corneal neovascularization. This condition occurs when the cornea becomes so deprived of oxygen that new blood vessels begin to grow into it in an

attempt to compensate. While this might seem like a helpful response, these new blood vessels can compromise the clarity of the cornea, impacting vision and potentially making it difficult or impossible to continue wearing contacts in the future. Eye doctors warn that neovascularization is irreversible, meaning that any vision impairment resulting from it could be permanent.

Dry eye and corneal abrasions are also common side effects of over-wearing contacts. When contacts are worn for too long, they can start to dry out, causing discomfort and even creating microscopic scratches on the cornea. These scratches, called corneal abrasions, often cause pain, redness, and light sensitivity. Moreover, any break in the corneal surface increases the risk of infection by providing an entry point for bacteria. Repeated abrasions can lead to corneal scarring and make wearing contacts uncomfortable or painful in the future.

Eye care professionals emphasize that the best way to avoid these risks is to adhere to the specific instructions for your contacts. For instance, daily disposable lenses are designed to be discarded after a single use, while monthly lenses can be worn up to 30 days, but they still require nightly removal and proper cleaning. Always follow your eye doctor's recommendations regarding wear time and replacement schedules, as different lenses have different oxygen permeability levels. Giving your eyes time to "breathe" by wearing glasses part of the time can also promote healthier eyes and reduce the likelihood of irritation and complications.

To care for your eyes and reduce risks, experts recommend practicing diligent hygiene when handling contacts. Clean your hands thoroughly before inserting or removing contacts, and never reuse or top off lens solution in your storage case. Contact solution is specifically formulated to disinfect, and reusing it can increase bacterial growth. Using a fresh solution each day and cleaning your contact lens case regularly are simple habits that can protect your eye health. If you find that you often need to wear contacts longer than advised, talk to your optometrist about extended-wear or higher-oxygen permeability lenses, which may be better suited to your lifestyle.

In summary, while contact lenses are convenient and effective for vision correction, wearing them for too long can pose serious risks to your eye health. Eye care experts agree that following the recommended guidelines for wear time, cleaning routines, and replacement schedules is the best way to enjoy contact lenses safely. Keeping your eyes healthy today can prevent vision problems in the future, so always prioritize proper contact lens care and follow your optometrist's advice.

Company Description

Each year thousands of patients come to Dr. Jason P. Brinton at Brinton Vision in St. Louis, seeking what we call visual freedom, or crisp, clear vision free of refractive errors, glasses, and contact lenses by treating myopia, hyperopia, and astigmatism. We accomplish this through LASIK and its six variations – SMILE, Visian ICL, PRK, Raindrop inlay, Kamra inlay, and Custom Lens Replacement.

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Google Folder: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1csRPXtwHGTcCfM3gia5EKkAiCrIULYYo?usp=drive_open

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