



Monthly Vision Health Bulletin

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How you see, How you look.

You may have just found out that you need some vision correction, and now you are faced with making an important decision ... should you choose glasses or contact lenses to help you see the world in focus?

NEW TECHNOLOGY OFFERS WIDE CHOICES

Contact lens technology has made great strides forward in the past few years, and now there is a contact lens suitable for virtually every vision requirement. Whether you are short or long-sighted; or suffer from astigmatism (a cornea shaped like a rugby ball instead of a soccer ball), there is almost certainly a contact lens for you.

Contact lenses typically provide better vision than glasses in cases of severe short sightedness (myopia) or long sightedness (hyperopia). Contacts even come in bifocal and progressive forms to allow for clear distant and close up vision from the same lenses. For the more adventurous wearers, contacts can give you the stunning blue or green eyes you have always wanted!

Contacts have other clear advantages over wearing glasses. If you're someone who is constantly putting things down and forgetting where they are, wearing glasses can be a nightmare! Contacts offer a broader field of vision than glasses, which can partially block side vision. Rapid temperature changes, or working outside in the rain can fog up glasses and obstruct vision, but cause no problems for contact lens wearers. Sportspeople often find contacts a better choice than glasses, especially for contact or water sports.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT CONTACTS FOR YOU

Having decided on contact lenses, there are a number of different options to choose from. Should you choose daily disposable lenses or 2 to 4 weekly disposable lenses, or contacts that can be worn continuously for up to 30 days at a time?

Disposable contacts are designed to be worn for a set period of time and then discarded. Depending on the type of lens, they are discarded after as little as one days' wear, or as long as one month. Throwing lenses away after such a short period of wear almost totally negates some of the risks and discomforts

associated with wearing the same lenses repeatedly for a year or more.

Daily disposables have become the gold standard for contact lens use, with a fresh pair of lenses each day eliminating costly and inconvenient lens care routines as well as dramatically reducing the likelihood of eye infection or contamination of the lenses. Daily disposables are also the most convenient and inexpensive choice for people

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contact lenses



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requiring only sporadic lens use, such as attending social events, or playing a sport.

A revolutionary contact lens material called silicone hydrogel has meant that contacts can now be worn day and night continuously for up to a month at a time. Previously this would have caused major eye problems, but the extreme oxygen permeability of this new material allows six times as much oxygen to reach the cornea, resulting in a high degree of comfort and eye tolerance. If you're someone who can't be bothered fiddling around with solutions and taking lenses in and out, this may be the perfect solution for you. Of if you travel a lot, or stay away from home unexpectedly you need never worry about contact lens solutions and storage cases again.

Sometimes rigid gas permeable lenses are required for more unusual prescriptions such as a very high degree of astigmatism. Today's highly gas permeable lenses provide excellent vision without the discomfort and annoyance often experienced with older style hard lenses.

SAFETY COMES FIRST

While it may be a great idea to buy your vegetables and flowers at the local Saturday morning market, NEVER be tempted to splash out on a pair of cheap and cheerful contact lenses from the next stall.

Contact lenses are a medical device and it is vital that you see an optometrist for professional fitting. Your optometrist is professionally qualified to advise you on the specific contact lens best suited to your visual and lifestyle requirements and the shape of your eye. Contact lens prescriptions are different to glasses prescriptions, so don't think you can just buy contact lenses based on the script you have had for eye glasses.

Fitting contacts involves more than just finding the right visual prescription. Contact lenses also have a base curve measurement (a measure of the curve of the lens) and a diameter which must be fitted to the exact shape and size of your eye. Wearing "one size fits all" over the counter lenses will most likely result in poorly fitting, uncomfortable and potentially dangerous lenses offering poor vision improvement.

Even swapping from a lens made from one type of material to a different material will require a completely new measurement and fitting process for your eye.

If you carefully follow the instructions of your optometrist, wearing contacts can be a comfortable, convenient and safe experience. Cutting corners with the care of your lenses can lead to eye infections, damage to the cornea and in some cases permanent vision loss. Never be tempted to save money by re-wearing lenses designed for single use; or

re-using soaking solutions more than once. You could pay a serious price with your precious eyesight.

For more information about making the right contact lens choices for you, speak to your Carlisle Mason optometrist or visit www.carlisle-mason.co.nz

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