



Fast Facts

Who Uses Contact Lenses

- More than 30 million people in the U.S. wear contact lenses ^{1, 2}.
- Two-thirds of contact lens wearers are female ².
- The average age of contact lens wearers worldwide is 31 years old ³.
- Ten percent of contact lens wearers are under 18 years old, 15% are between ages 18-24, 50% are between ages 25-44, and 25% are age 45 or older ².

Contact Lenses in the U.S.

- Contact lenses are medical devices and are regulated by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) through the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act ⁴.
- Rigid, or hard, contact lenses made from plastic were first produced in the U.S. between 1938-1940 ⁵.
- Soft contact lenses were first introduced to the U.S. in 1971 ⁶.
- Eighty percent of contact lens wearers use soft contact lenses ².

Benefits of Contact Lens Use

- People can use many different methods to improve their vision, and no single method is the best solution for everyone. Contact lenses are one of several effective options.
- Contact lenses can help people see better without affecting their appearance or interfering with many sports and activities.
- Some children and teens report feeling dramatically better about their appearance when wearing contact lenses ^{7, 8}.
- Compared to wearing glasses, children switching to contact lenses reported significant improvements in the areas of perceived appearance, participation in activities, and satisfaction with vision correction ⁸.

- Specially designed contact lenses can improve the ability to focus and temporarily reduce poor distance vision (near-sightedness) in certain contact lens wearers^{4, 9}.

Complications & Risk Factors

- Serious eye infections that can lead to blindness affect up to 1 out of every 500 contact lens users per year¹⁰.
- Not following proper contact lens care instructions has been linked to outbreaks of serious eye infections¹¹.
- Between 40%-90% of contact lens wearers do not properly follow the care instructions for their contact lenses¹².
- Improper cleaning and irregular replacement of contact lenses and contact lens cases—as well as other behaviors relating to contact lens hygiene and care—have been linked to a higher risk of complications¹²⁻¹⁴.
- Keratitis—a painful eye infection often linked to improper contact lens use—leads to 1 million doctor and hospital visits annually, at a cost of \$175 million to the US healthcare system¹⁵.

Prevention

Keep your eyes healthy while wearing contact lenses by following [these tips](#), and always be sure to carry a pair of glasses with you—just in case you have to take out your contact lenses.

References

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