

## Caring for your rigid gas permeable (RGP) contact lenses

### Other formats

If you need this information in another format such as audio CD, Braille, large print, high contrast, British Sign Language or translated into another language please contact the PALS desk on 01271 314090 or at [ndht.pals@nhs.net](mailto:ndht.pals@nhs.net).

### Why is it important to look after my contact lenses?

Contact lens wear increases your risk of an eye infection, which can be sight threatening. However this risk can be minimised by following the instructions below.

### How do I insert my contact lenses?

1. Make sure you are in a well lit room with a flat clean surface and a mirror. If working over a sink, put the plug in and place a towel over the sink.
2. Do not apply moisturiser or make up before inserting your contact lenses.
3. **Always wash and dry your hands before inserting or removing your contact lenses.**
4. Carefully remove the contact lens from its case. Rinse the contact lens with saline if you have been instructed to do so. Place the lens on your index finger of your right hand (or left hand if left-handed). Make sure the lens is on the centre of your fingertip.



5. Check that there is nothing on the lens and that it is not damaged (e.g. fluff from a towel or chips at the edge of the lens).
6. If you have been given a separate cleaner and soaking/wetting solution. Put a drop of soaking/wetting solution onto the centre of the contact lens

7. Pull your lower lid down with the middle finger of your right hand (or left hand if left-handed). Hold up the upper lid with the fingers of your other hand. Gently place the contact lens onto the coloured part of your eye.



8. If the contact lens slips onto the white part of your eye, move it back to the centre using your eyelid. **Do not drag the lens across with your fingers.** Alternatively you can remove the lens and re-insert it.
9. Repeat for your other eye if you have been given contact lenses for both eyes.
10. Discard the solution left in the contact lens case. Rinse the contact lens case with some fresh multipurpose contact lens solution or saline (depending on which you have been given). Leave the case to air dry upside down on a tissue.

## How do I remove my contact lenses?

There are two methods you can use to remove your contact lenses.

### Method one:

1. You will need your contact lens case and contact lens cleaning solution. Make sure you are in a well lit room with a mirror.
2. **Always wash and dry your hands before inserting or removing your contact lenses.**
3. Check your contact lens case is clean and dry. If it is not, rinse with some fresh multipurpose solution or saline (depending on which you have been given) and wipe it dry with a clean tissue.
4. Looking straight ahead in the mirror, position your lower eyelid against your eyeball and underneath the lower edge of the contact lens using the middle and index fingers or your right hand (or left hand if left-handed).
5. Lift up the upper lid with the fingers of your other hand. Gradually move the top lid down and inwards towards the eye. The upper lid should catch the top edge of the lens and the lens should come out.

**Method two:**

1. You will need your contact lens case and contact lens cleaning solution. Make sure you are in a well lit room with a mirror.
2. **Always wash and dry your hands before inserting or removing your contact lenses.**
3. Check your contact lens case is clean and dry. If it is not, rinse with some fresh multipurpose solution or saline (depending on which you have been given) and wipe it dry with a clean tissue.
4. Look straight ahead and open your eyes as wide as possible.
5. Place one finger at the outer corner of your eye and pull your eyelids as tight as possible.
6. Blink and the lens should drop out. Be ready to catch it with your hand or let it drop onto a towel or clean flat surface.
  - Alternatively follow the instructions given by your optometrist if they have instructed you to remove the contact lens with a different method.

**Method one****Method two:****How do I clean my contact lenses?****If you have been given a multipurpose contact lens cleaning solution:**

1. Place the lens in the middle of your palm. Apply 2-3 drops of the multipurpose cleaning solution over the contact lens. Use your index finger to gently rub the lens with the solution in the palm of your hand for around 15-30 seconds. Flip the lens over, apply the solution again and rub for another 15-30 seconds.
2. Rinse the lens thoroughly with the multipurpose cleaning solution.
3. Place the lens into the contact lens case and fill the case with fresh multipurpose cleaning solution.
4. Put the lid on the case and leave to soak for at least 4 hours. This disinfects the lens.

**If you have been given a separate cleaner and soaking solution:**

1. Put 3-4 drops of cleaner onto the contact lens.
2. Rub both sides of the lens with your finger for 20-30 seconds.
3. Over a sink rinse the lens thoroughly with saline.
4. Place the lens into the contact lens case and fill the case with fresh soaking and wetting solution.
5. Put the lid on the case and leave to soak for at least 4 hours. This disinfects the lens.

**Warnings**

- **Never use tap water to clean or store your lenses.** This greatly increases your chance of developing a sight threatening eye infection.
- **Never swim, shower or bathe in your lenses.** This greatly increases your chance of developing a sight threatening eye infection.
- **Do not wear your lenses longer than your optometrist recommends.**
- **Do not sleep or nap in your contact lenses.**
- **If you accidentally drop your lenses make sure you clean them thoroughly before wearing them again.**

**Wearing schedule**

- You should wear your contact lenses for .....hours initially.
- This can be gradually increased to a maximum wearing time of .....
- The recommended contact lens cleaning solution issued today is:  
.....
- It is recommended that you consult with your optometrist first before changing your contact lens cleaning solution.

**Further advice**

- It is a good idea to carry your glasses with you when you start wearing contact lenses in case you have to remove the contact lenses.
- Replace your contact lens case every month.
- Always keep the cap on the contact lens cleaning solution when it is not being used. Store at room temperature, out of direct sunlight.

- Once opened, the length of time for which contact lens solution is safe to use depends on the type of solution used – please check with your optometrist if you are not sure.
- If you do not wear your contact lenses for 30 days, clean and disinfect them again before wear.

## What do I do if I am having problems with my contact lenses?

- If the lens is uncomfortable, your vision has become blurred, or the eye has become red, **remove the lens** and contact:
  - **Eye Clinic:** 01271 322647 (Monday – Friday 8am – 5.30pm).
  - **Optometry Department:** 01271 311714 (Monday – Thursday 8am – 6pm, Friday 8am – 5.30pm) Please note the phone is not always manned but if you leave a message we will contact you.
  - **A&E** (24 hours a day, seven days a week).

## Further information

For more information on how to care for your RGP contact lenses, please contact the Optometry department.

Alternatively the websites below offer useful information on caring for your RGP contact lenses:

[www.aop.org.uk/advice-and-support/for-patients/contact-lenses/rigid-lenses](http://www.aop.org.uk/advice-and-support/for-patients/contact-lenses/rigid-lenses)

[www.moorfields.nhs.uk/content/contact-lens-insertion-removal-and-care](http://www.moorfields.nhs.uk/content/contact-lens-insertion-removal-and-care) (this website has a video demonstrating insertion, removal and cleaning of RGP contact lenses)

## References

Association of Optometrists (2018) *Advice if You Wear Rigid Contact Lenses* Available from: <https://www.aop.org.uk/advice-and-support/for-patients/contact-lenses/rigid-lenses> [Accessed 18 Oct 2018].

College of Optometrists (2018) *Contact Lenses* Available from: <http://www.lookafteryoureyes.org/seeing-clearly/eye-wear/contact-lenses/> [Accessed 18 Oct 2018].

Moorfields Eye Hospital NHS Foundation Trust (2018) *Contact Lens Insertion, Removal and Care* Available from: <http://www.moorfields.nhs.uk/content/contact-lens-insertion-removal-and-care> [Accessed 18 Oct 2018].

Wu, Y., et al. (2015) Contact Lens Hygiene Compliance and Lens Case Contamination: A Review. *Contact Lens and Anterior Eye* 38(5): 307-316.

Wu, Y, et al. (2015) The Effect of Contact Lens Hygiene Behavior on Lens Case Contamination. *Optometry and Vision Science* 92(2): 167-174.

## **PALS**

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) ensures that the NHS listens to patients, relatives, carers and friends, answers questions and resolves concerns as quickly as possible. If you have a query or concern call 01271 314090 or email [ndht.pals@nhs.net](mailto:ndht.pals@nhs.net). You can also visit the PALS and Information Centre in person at North Devon District Hospital, Barnstaple.

## **Have your say**

Northern Devon Healthcare NHS Trust aims to provide high quality services. However, please tell us when something could be improved. If you have a comment or compliment about a service or treatment, please raise your comments with a member of staff or the PALS team in the first instance.

'Care Opinion' comments forms are on all wards or online at [www.careopinion.org.uk](http://www.careopinion.org.uk).

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