

# Should You Wear Contact Lenses?

## Can You Wear Contact Lenses?

Contact lenses offer you freedom from glasses. They are easy to take care of and wear. But, they may not be right for you.

You may not be able to wear contact lenses if:

- you have eye irritation from allergies
- you are around dust and chemicals at your job
- you have an overactive thyroid, uncontrolled diabetes or severe arthritis in your hands
- your eyes are very dry.

An exam by your eye care provider will help you decide if you can wear contact lenses and which lenses are best for you.

## Types of Contact Lenses

Contact lenses are small, curved pieces of plastic shaped to fit your eyes. Contacts can correct vision problems such as:

- farsightedness (you can see clearly in the distance, but it is blurry close up)
- astigmatism (you have focus problems caused by the cornea).

Contacts float on the tear film in front of your cornea — the clear outer surface of your eye.

There are two main types of contact lenses: soft and gas permeable.

- Soft contact lenses are popular with new contact wearers because they are easy to wear. These lenses should be replaced on a regular schedule. This will help avoid problems such as irritation, red eyes and corneal infections. Soft contact lenses cannot correct some types of vision problems.
- Gas permeable rigid contact lenses are strong and easy to handle. It may take a while for you to get used to these. They make your eyes more sensitive to irritants such as smoke and dust. Gas permeable rigid lenses offer your eyes the best oxygen transmission to your eyes. This is important for your eye health.

There are many specialty contact lenses available, including those to correct astigmatism, those that have tints and those with bifocals.

## Being Fitted for Contact Lenses

To buy contact lenses, you must have an eye exam or show proof of an eye exam in the last 6 months. You will then have an evaluation. Your eye care practitioner will decide which contact lenses are right for the comfort, health and visual needs of your eyes.

## Insurance Coverage

Health care benefits change and differ from plan to plan and provider to provider. It is important for you to understand your health care benefits before being fitted for contact lenses.

Please call your insurance provider and find out exactly what is and isn't covered under your plan, and how much you have to pay yourself.