



Resource guide for  
**new contact  
lens wearers**

.....

Taking care of your contact lenses will help your eyes stay safe and healthy. Most problems with contacts are the result of poor lens care. Please use this guide as your reference for wearing and caring for your contacts.

**visionessentials**  
by KAISER PERMANENTE®

All plans offered and underwritten by Kaiser Foundation Health Plan of the Northwest.  
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# So you've decided on contact lenses

## Be sure to:

- Follow instructions on how to wear and care for your contact lenses.
- Return for your follow-up appointments.
- Remove your lenses if your eyes hurt, are unusually red or have any discharge, or if your vision is blurry.

## Contact lens prescription

During the fitting process, your optometrist may decide a different lens would work better for you. Any lens changes or follow-up visits are covered under the contact lens evaluation period. This period is for 3 months following your initial exam.

Follow-up care is critical to ensure healthy eyes, good vision, and comfort. Often lenses are changed during these visits for a better fit. Your contact lens prescription will be written after the follow-up visits, when it is determined which lens works best for you.

## Ordering contact lenses

Place your first contact lens order in person at a Vision Essentials location or over the phone at **1-800-813-2000**, option 3 (TTY **711**). After that, you can order some lens types online, through the life of the prescription. [Click here](#) to set up an account.

The online site is for reorders only and is not available for all lens types. Ask a Vision Essentials employee if your prescription is eligible for online reorder.

## **You also need eyeglasses**

We strongly suggest that you have a pair of glasses to use as a backup when you are not wearing your contact lenses. This becomes vital if you lose a lens or your eyes become irritated by illness or infection. Your eyeglass prescription is not the same as the contact lens prescription.

### **Save 30% on glasses**

Buy a year's supply of contact lenses in a single purchase from Vision Essentials in the Northwest and receive 30% off a complete pair of eyeglasses and/or sunglasses. The glasses purchase must be made within 30 days of buying a year's supply of contacts.

# Things you may encounter

## During the first few weeks of contact lens wear, you may experience:

### ■ Light sensitivity

Mild light sensitivity in both eyes is common. It will eventually decrease. The best relief for this is nonprescription sunglasses for daytime wear. A sudden, marked increase in light sensitivity in one eye could be a symptom of a serious eye problem. If this happens, remove your lenses and contact your optometrist immediately.

### ■ Single eye or lens symptoms

Usually, both eyes do not adapt at equal rates. One eye or lens may be more blurred, uncomfortable, red, or itchy than the other. Single eye symptoms can be a sign of a serious problem, or it may be a simple lens issue. Often the offending lens may be dirty or inside out. Remove, inspect, and clean the lens before putting it back in. This may also be a sign of a torn or damaged lens; remove and inspect carefully. Do not wear a torn or damaged lens – it can hurt your eye.

### ■ Fog or haze

If your lenses seem foggy or hazy, it may be a sign the lens is inside out. Remove the lens, then clean, rinse, and reinsert. If this persists, notify Vision Essentials during office hours or an advice nurse if after office hours.



### For urgent eye care issues

#### During office hours:

Vision Essentials ..... 1-800-813-2000, option 3  
(TTY 711)

#### After office hours:

Advice nurse ..... 1-800-813-2000, option 1  
(TTY 711)

# After your first visit

As you begin to wear contact lenses, you may be told to gradually increase your wear time day by day.

Be sure to wear your lenses to your follow-up appointment. Have them in for at least 2 hours before arriving.

## Your contact lens wear schedule:

| Day 1 | Day 2 | Day 3 | Day 4 | Day 5 | Day 6 | Day 7 |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| hours | hours | hours | hours | hours | hours | hours |

## In the beginning, it is normal if:

- Your lenses feel funny.
- One lens is more noticeable than the other.
- Your vision seems fuzzier than with glasses.
- You have better vision in one eye than the other.
- You have trouble handling your lenses.

These conditions are normal in the early stages of wearing your contacts, but please mention them to us when you come in for your checkup.

## Remove your lenses if you:

- Develop unusual discharge, pain, or redness.
- Experience a decrease in vision that does not clear up.
- Suspect something is wrong.

# Dos and don'ts for contact lens wearers



## Do...

- Wash your hands before handling your lenses. Use a soap without lanolin, moisturizers, deodorant, or perfume.
- Check your lenses regularly for damage or discoloration.
- Follow your optometrist's instructions for contact lens solutions.
- Check solution expiration dates.
- Keep the caps on bottles of solution.
- Clean and disinfect lenses after each use.
- Review and follow the use and care instructions for your soaking and cleaning solution.
- Follow lens replacement schedules.
- Keep your fingernails short and smooth.
- Avoid hairspray mist when wearing lenses.
- If you wear makeup, apply it after inserting your lenses. Always remove your lenses first, then remove your makeup.



## Do not...

- Use any eye drops without your optometrist's approval.
- Rub your eyes.
- Wear lenses in the presence of chemical fumes.
- Wear lenses longer than the prescribed wearing time.
- Sleep in your lenses, unless approved by your optometrist.
- Wear lenses when eyes are red, irritated, or painful, or when vision is blurred.
- Use tap water or distilled water for rinsing or storing soft lenses.
- Soak in a hot tub or swim while wearing lenses.
- Wet your lenses by placing them in your mouth.
- Scrape your lens across a surface when picking up a dropped lens.
- Wash your rigid lenses in hot water, as they may warp.
- Touch the tip of the solution bottle to the lens.



# Cosmetics and contact lenses

If you wear makeup, apply it after inserting your lenses. Always remove your lenses first, then remove your makeup.

## What to use

- **Mascara:** Should be water-soluble to reduce the risk of deposits and flakes and to assist in easy removal. Replace your mascara every 3 months.
- **Eyeliner:** Should not flake easily. Avoid liquid types, which tend to dry with time and cause particles to flake into the eye. Do not apply eye makeup on the inner edge of the eyelids, as small particles could be transferred onto the surface of your lens.
- **Eye shadow:** Avoid metallic and frosted eye shadows.
- **Soaps:** Avoid oil-based facial soaps containing creams, lanolin, or perfume.
- **Removers:** Water-based products that will not leave a residue on the lens are best. Do not allow soaps, cosmetics, or other chemical substances to come into contact with your lenses.
- **Hairspray:** Apply before inserting your lenses. If you do use hairspray while wearing your lenses, be sure to keep your eyes closed and immediately walk out of the area to avoid the spray that remains in the air.

## Potential problems

- **Oily film:** Caused by oil-based or greasy cosmetics such as cream eye shadows and oily makeup removers. It can interfere with lens hydration and allows the lens to dry out more quickly.
- **Flakes and fibers:** From mascara and powdered products. Particles can get trapped beneath the lens, causing discomfort and/or corneal abrasion.
- **Bacterial infection:** Related to contaminated cosmetics.

## Centering the lens

- If the lens becomes displaced onto the white part of your eye, you will need to re-center it. Begin by sitting over a towel-covered table.
- Locate the lens with a mirror. It will be under the upper or lower lid or on the right or left side of the cornea (clear front surface of the eye).
- Look as far as you can in the direction opposite to the location of the lens.
- Gently move the lens onto the cornea with one of these ways:
  - Close the eyelid and gently massage the lens into place by finger pressure through your lids.
  - While looking to the extreme opposite direction of the location of the lens, trap the lens by exerting finger pressure through your lids. Maintain this pressure and look in the direction of the displaced lens as far as you can.
- Check your vision to confirm the lens is centered.

Do not worry. The lens is always within reach; **it cannot get lost behind your eye.**

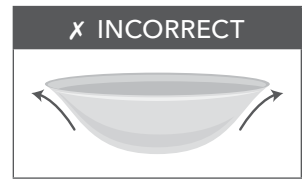
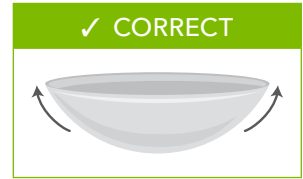
## Soft contact lenses – care

Please follow these guidelines to avoid losing or damaging your soft contact lenses and for putting in (inserting) your lenses. Careful cleaning and handling will help you get the most comfortable and longest possible use from your contacts.

- Keep your nails short and smooth. Avoid touching the lens with your fingernails. Fingernails cause the largest number of torn and nicked lenses.
- Do not use your fingertip to drag the lenses out of the case. Pour them into your palm and pick them up.
- Keep the lenses very wet while cleaning. Soft lenses become brittle as they dry out. If they are pinched together while partially dehydrated, they can crack. Put a drop of approved solution in your eye 30 seconds before lens removal to completely rewet the lenses.
- Rub with a gentle back and forth motion when cleaning your lenses. Avoid a circular motion. Very little pressure is required.
- Make sure you can see the lens in the center of the lens case before you close the lid.
- Be extra cautious at night – many lenses are lost or damaged at night when the wearer is tired.

# Soft contact lenses – putting them in

- Wash your hands with a mild soap, rinse thoroughly, and dry with a lint-free towel.
- Place your lens on your index (pointer) finger.
- Inspect the lens for damage or debris, and to be certain it is right side out (cup-shaped).  
*See images to the right.*
- Place your middle finger against your lower lashes and pull down the lower lid.
- Place the index or middle finger of your other hand on the upper lashes, lift the lid, and press firmly against your brow. This will help prevent the normal blink reflex.
- Look straight up and apply the lens on the white part of your eye beneath the cornea. Press the lens gently but firmly on the eye.
- While still holding the lid, look down to center the lens. Release your lower lid first, then the upper lid.
- Blink completely and gently press over your closed lid to press out any air bubbles from under the lens.
- Check the vision in each eye individually to make certain the lens is in place.



## If your vision is blurry, the lens may be:

- Switched.
- Not centered.
- Inside out.
- Dirty.
- Torn.

# Soft contact lenses – taking them out

## Before removal

- Wash your hands with a mild soap, rinse thoroughly, and dry with a lint-free towel.
- Have the cleaner and rinsing/disinfection solutions ready.

## Removal

- Place your middle finger on your lower lashes and pull down the lower lid.
- Place the index or middle finger of your other hand on the upper lashes, lift the lid up, and press firmly against your brow. This will help prevent the normal blink reflex.
- Look straight up and touch the bottom of the lens with your index finger. Firmly slide the lens down. Keep looking straight up, holding the index finger against the lens. Gently press your thumb and index finger together on the lens, folding the lens off your eye.
- Follow your daily cleaning and disinfecting routine.
- Repeat for the other eye.

# Soft contact lenses – daily cleaning and disinfecting

## Before removal

- Wash your hands.
- Always apply and remove the same side first to avoid switching the lenses.

## Hydrogen peroxide solution

**Rinse:** Place lenses in left and right holders. Rinse each holder with hydrogen peroxide solution for 5 seconds.

**Fill:** Fill case to fill line with hydrogen peroxide solution.

**Soak:** Soak for at least 6 hours for cleaning and disinfection. Do not put lenses in before 6 hours, or your eyes may burn and sting.

Never use with a flat lens case. Hydrogen peroxide solutions work only with the special lens case provided.

## Multipurpose solution

**Rinse:** Thoroughly rinse each side of the lens for 5 seconds with multipurpose solution. Place your contact lenses in a clean contact lens case.

**Fill:** Fill the case with fresh multipurpose solution.

**Soak:** Soak for at least 4 hours for cleaning and disinfection.

## Other tips

- Use a lint-free towel.
- Do not handle the lenses over a sink.
- Work in a well-lit area.
- Never put your lenses away dirty. This can cause protein to build up, which may require more frequent replacement of your lenses.

# Rigid contact lenses – putting them in

## Application

- Wash your hands.
- Place the prepared lens on your index finger and examine it for damage or debris.
- Lean over the table with your chin tucked down until you are looking straight down.
- Place the middle finger of the same hand on your lower lashes and pull down the lower lid.
- Use the index or middle finger of your other hand to hold the lashes of the upper lid up firmly against the brow.
- Focus on an object (such as the lid of your case) to avoid watching the lens. Keep both eyes open and place the lens gently on the cornea.
- Release your lower lid first, then the upper lid. Blinking will automatically center the lens.
- Check the vision in each eye individually to make certain the lens is in place.

### **If your vision is blurry, the lens may be:**

- Switched.
- Not centered.
- Inside out.
- Dirty.
- Torn.

# Rigid contact lenses – taking them out

## Before removal

- Wash your hands.
- Have your case and cleaning/conditioning solutions ready.

## Blink method to remove contacts

1. Sit at a table and put a clean towel on it in front of you. Lean over until you are looking directly at the towel.
2. Place your index finger at the outer corner of your upper and lower lids, then stretch the skin outward while keeping your eyes open wide.
3. Cup your other hand below the eye and blink briskly. The pressure of your eyelids will pinch the lens, which will pop out into the palm of your hand.

## Two-finger method to remove contacts

1. Sit at a table and put a clean towel on it in front of you. Lean over until you are looking directly at the towel.
2. Place the tip of the index finger of one hand on the middle of the edge of the upper lid. Put the index finger of the other hand on the middle of the edge of the lower lid.
3. Press the lid edges gently against your eye and then slide them together. The lens should be wedged out of the eye onto your hand or towel.
4. If the lens de-centers onto the white part of the eye, it must be re-centered before repeating the removal procedure. (See “Centering the lens” on [page 10](#).)



# Rigid contact lenses – daily cleaning and disinfecting

## Before removal

- Wash your hands.
- Always apply and remove the same side first to avoid switching the lenses.

## Every evening after removal

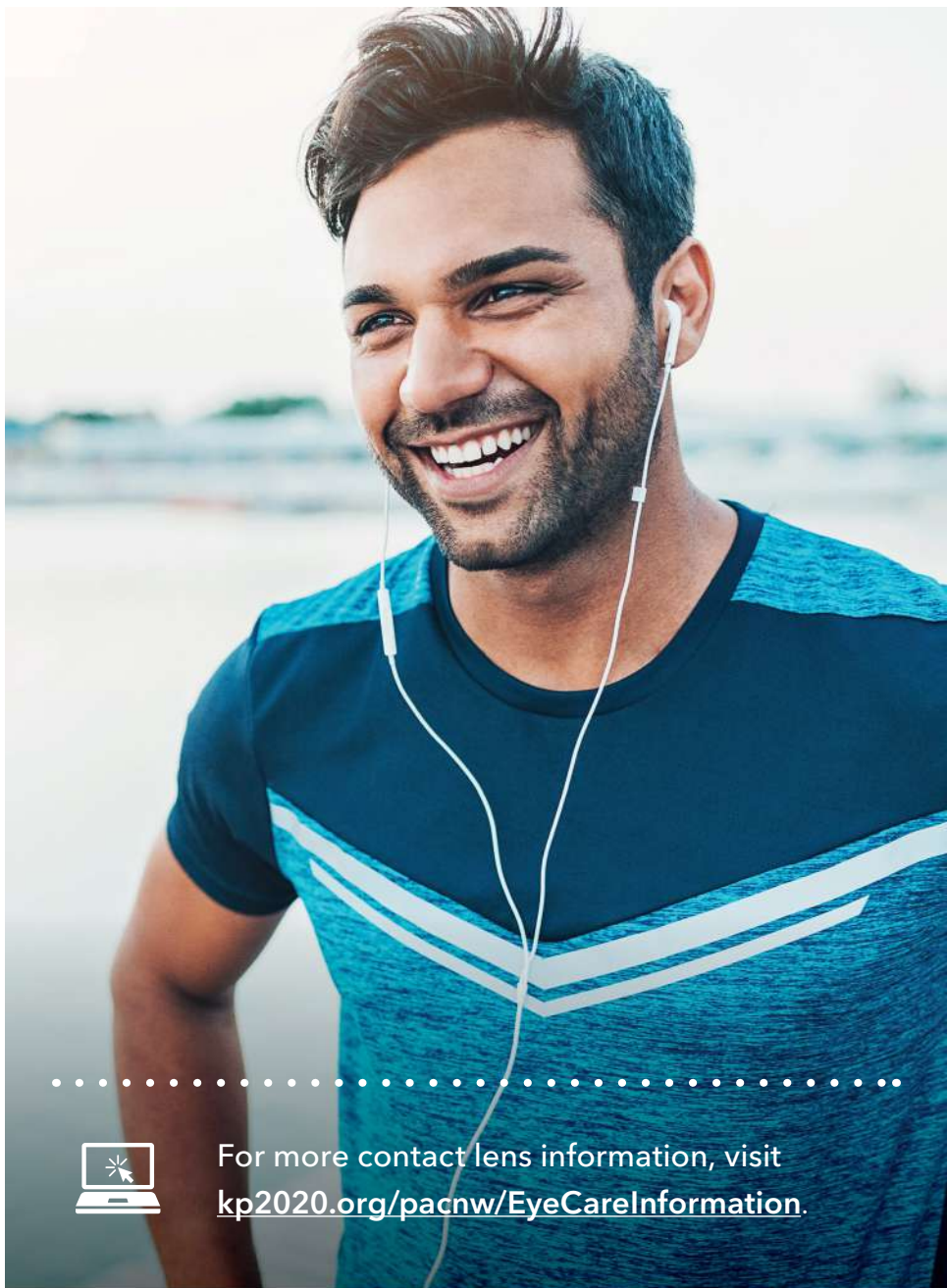
- Rub both sides of the lenses with 2-4 drops of lens cleaner in the palm of your hand for 20 seconds.
- Remove all traces of cleaner by thoroughly rinsing with fresh tap water.
- Place lenses in empty lens case.
- Fill with fresh lens conditioning solution.
- Soak lenses for at least 4 hours (or overnight).

## Every morning

- Remove lenses from lens case after soaking.
- Wet lenses with fresh lens conditioning solution for additional cushioning, if desired.
- Insert your lenses.
- Clean the interior of your lens case thoroughly with hot water and air-dry. Replace your lens case monthly.

## Every week

- Use a contact lens enzymatic cleaner to remove protein deposits.



For more contact lens information, visit  
[kp2020.org/pacnw/EyeCareInformation](http://kp2020.org/pacnw/EyeCareInformation).



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