

CONTACT LENS PRACTICE and COVID-19: 4 actions for you to minimize transmission

In the time of coronavirus CL practice may become more difficult. As CL practitioners we have the responsibility to minimize the transmission of COVID-19 in CL practice based on current scientific evidence.^{1,2}



1. Protect yourself and monitor your staff

Personal protective equipment such as eye protection (goggles or safety spectacles), water-resistant gloves with long tight-fitting cuffs, and surgical-style face masks, should be adopted to reduce the likelihood of infection via either airborne or direct transmission.^{3,4,5}

CL practitioners and staff with potential flu-like symptoms should not come in to work.⁷

2. Sanitize your hands

Hand washing must be performed before and after significant contact with any patient, even when gloves are worn.^{7,8,9} Hand sanitization includes cleansing hands with an alcohol-based hand rub or with soap and water or both.^{4,9,10} It is important that during patient examination, CL practitioners must avoid touching their own face, nose, mouth and eyes.⁷



3. Disinfect well your CL equipment

Clean all the instruments used in CL practice such as trial frame and ophthalmic lenses, chin rest and head rest (slit lamp, keratometer, etc.). You can do it with water and detergent and applying commonly used hospital-level disinfectants (such as sodium hypochlorite, 70% alcohol or an alternative disinfectant).^{5,6}

This should be done once the patient has left the room.

4. Disinfect your CL trial set

In the case of specialty CL fitting such as RGP where a trial set of CLs is used, it becomes very important to ensure that CL are disinfected well between patients. In these cases, rigorous infection control measures must be followed.⁷



References:

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CONTACT LENS WEAR and COVID-19: 4 key points for your patients

The message around hygiene should be reinforced to CL patients and they should be reminded to wash hands thoroughly before touching their own eyes and their CLs. Patients should also be reminded to clean their CLs correctly, ensuring full disinfection of reusable CLs and not using disposable CLs longer than they are intended. Patients should cease contact lens wear when sick, consistent with guidance for other types of illnesses.^{1,2}



1. Contact Lens Wear is Safe.

Contact lens wear remains a safe and highly effective form of vision correction for millions of people worldwide. There is no evidence to date that contact lens wear should be avoided by healthy individuals, or that contact lens wearers are more at risk of developing a coronavirus infection compared to those wearing spectacles.

Remind your wearers to follow the CL instructions for use and in particular to avoid contact lenses to get 'in contact' with water (tap water, swimming pool, hot tub...).

2. Disinfect Contact Lenses.

Contact lens wearers should either dispose of their daily disposable lenses after wear, or regularly disinfect their reusable lenses and lens case with contact lens solution only, according to manufacturer and eye care professional instructions.



3. Proper hand washing is essential.

When using contact lenses or spectacles, careful and thorough hand washing with soap and water followed by hand drying with unused paper towels is paramount. For contact lens wearers, this should occur before every application and removal of their contact lenses.

4. Disinfect Spectacles and Glasses.

Some viruses such as COVID-19 can remain on hard surfaces for hours to days, which can be transferred to spectacles wearers' fingers and faces. There is no scientific evidence that wearing spectacles or glasses provide protection against COVID-19 or other viral transmissions.



References:

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2. CORE Advises Contact Lens Wearers on Safe Use Amidst COVID-19 Concerns, Reinforces Proper Hand Hygiene <https://core.uwaterloo.ca/news/core-advises-contact-lens-wearers-on-safe-use-amidst-covid-19-concerns-reinforces-proper-hand-hygiene/>