

Don't take shortcuts when caring for contact lenses, expert says

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Here's what to do and what not to do to avoid eye problems.

(HealthDay)—Common shortcuts people take when caring for their contact lenses could have serious consequences, such as infections or ulcerations, according to an eye disease expert.

"While contacts are generally very safe, wearers should know that poor contact care can lead to serious health issues," Dr. Sean Edelstein, AN assistant professor of ophthalmology at Saint Louis University Medical Center, said in a university news release. "Unfortunately, I usually see patients after they've developed contact-lens-related infections or inflammation."

"Eye redness, pain, sensitivity to light and blurry vision are symptoms that suggest something is wrong," said Edelstein, who specializes in

cornea and external [diseases of the eye](#). "In this scenario, you should immediately remove your contact lens and see an eye-care professional."

Shortcuts people often take when caring for their contact lenses include:

- Using expired lens solutions
- Reusing leftover contact solution
- Exposing contacts to non-sterile water
- Wearing contacts too long or overnight
- Not cleaning contacts or disinfecting storage cases well enough

Most often, corneal infections are caused by bacteria, particularly *Pseudomonas* and *Staphylococcus*. In rare cases, Edelstein noted, [contact lenses](#) may be infected by fungi or parasites, which is more difficult to treat. In extreme cases, infections can spread deep into the eye, causing endophthalmitis (inflammation inside the eyeball).

[Corneal ulcers](#) also can cause scarring in the cornea, as well as permanent [vision loss](#). To prevent these harmful effects of poor contact-lens care, Edelstein advises people to take these precautions:

- Never substitute tap water for contact solution.
- Always use fresh contact solution.
- Keep your contact case and lenses clean and handle them properly.
- Don't wear your contacts for extended periods of time.

More information: The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has more about [contact lens care](#).

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