

# It's 'Buyer beware' for decorative contact lenses, FDA says

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Get an eye exam and a valid prescription to help prevent eye damage, experts caution.

(HealthDay)—Decorative contact lenses may seem like a fun accessory, but if you're not careful, they can cause serious eye damage.

Decorative contacts should be fitted properly by an optometrist or ophthalmologist, according to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). It's important to get an eye exam and a valid prescription for these lenses and buy them from a trustworthy seller, the FDA cautioned.

To spread the word about the potential health risks associated with decorative contact lenses, the FDA joined forces with the American Optometric Association (AOA), and the Entertainment Industries Council (EIC). The three groups offered guidance on how to use these

lenses safely. Their recommendations include:

- Visit an optometrist or ophthalmologist for an exam before using decorative contact lenses—even if you think your vision is perfect. You should also schedule follow-up exams
- Be sure to get a valid prescription for these lenses. This prescription should specify the brand name, lens measurements and an expiration date.
- Avoid anime, or circle, lenses. The FDA has not approved these contacts. They are larger than typical lenses in order to give those who wear them a wide-eyed, doll-like look.
- Do not buy decorative contact lenses from any seller that doesn't require you to provide a prescription.
- Follow all directions on how to clean, disinfect and wear the lenses.

"I think if I were to leave anybody with a piece of advice on contact lenses, it would be yeah, they're fun. They can be fantastic," Scott Smiledge of Eye Inc FX, a supplier of hand-painted contact lenses for professional production in the film and television industry, said in an FDA news release.

"Just make sure you do it the right way. Make sure that you're buying from a place that is following the rules and you're buying lenses that have been handled properly. And that your eye doctor knows about and approves of it," he added.

Despite following these precautions, using decorative lenses can still lead to a serious infection. In extreme cases, blindness may occur.

Anyone who uses these lenses and develops any of the following symptoms should visit their [eye](#) doctor right away:

- Redness
- Eye pain that doesn't go away after a short time
- Problems with vision

These recommendations on decorative [contact lenses](#) were published on the FDA's Consumer Updates page.

**More information:** The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has more about [contact lens safety tips](#).

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