

Most contact lens wearers take chances with their eyes: CDC

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Old cases, contaminated solution and sleeping in lenses boost infection risk.

(HealthDay)—Most contact lens wearers close their eyes to safety recommendations, a new U.S. government study finds.

Nearly all of the 41 million Americans who use contact lenses admit they engage in at least one type of risky behavior that can lead to [eye infections](#), U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention researchers reported Thursday.

And nearly one-third of [contact lens](#) wearers have sought medical care for potentially preventable problems such as painful or red eyes, they said.

"Good vision contributes to overall well-being and independence for

people of all ages, so it's important not to cut corners on healthy contact lens wear and care," Dr. Jennifer Cope, a medical epidemiologist at the CDC, said in an agency news release.

"We are finding that many wearers are unclear about how to properly wear and care for contact lenses," Cope said.

CDC researchers conducted an online survey of contact lens users and found that more than 99 percent reported at least one risky habit.

Four-fifths admitted keeping their contact lens cases for longer than recommended, and more than half said they add new solution to the existing solution instead of emptying the contact lens case first. About half reported wearing their contact lenses while sleeping.

Each of these behaviors boosts the risk of eye infections by five times or more, according to the CDC. The study was published in the Aug. 21 issue of the agency's *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*.

The CDC outlined the following ways contact lens wearers can reduce their risk of eye infections:

- Wash your hands with soap and water, and dry them before touching contact lenses.
- Remove contacts before sleeping, showering or swimming.
- Rub and rinse contacts in disinfecting solutions each time you remove them.
- After each use, rub and rinse the contact lens case with solution, dry the case with a clean tissue and store it upside down with the caps off.
- Don't add fresh solution to old solution.
- Replace contact lens cases at least once every three months, and carry a pair of backup glasses in case you have to remove your

[contact lenses](#).

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

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