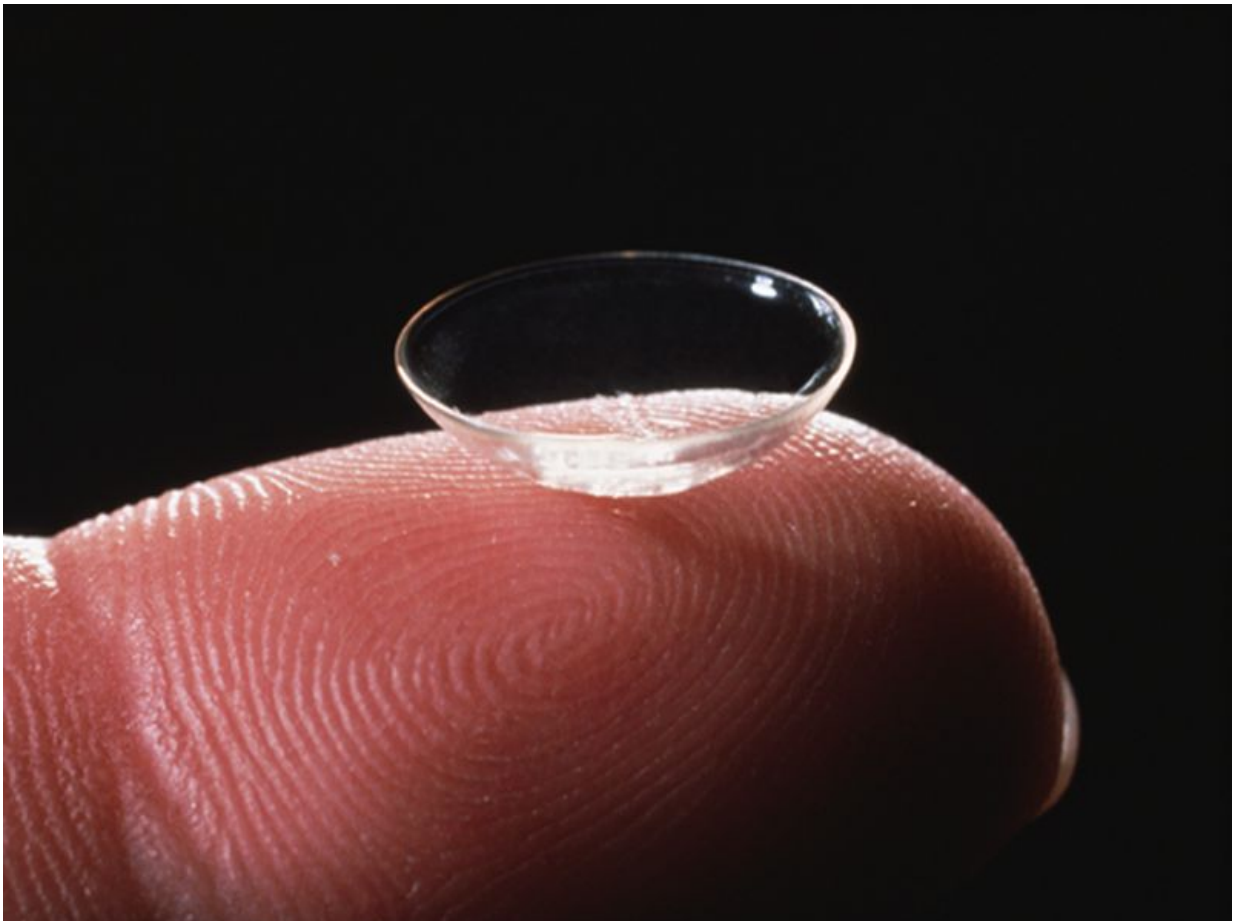


## Soft contact lenses safe for kids and teens, review finds

July 5 2017

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(HealthDay)—Soft contact lenses are as safe for children and teens as

they are for adults, a new review finds.

"In the past decade, there has been increasing interest in fitting children with [contact lenses](#)," said [review](#) author Mark Bullimore, an adjunct professor at the University of Houston College of Optometry.

He reviewed nine studies that included 7- to 19-year-olds who use [soft contact lenses](#), to gauge the risk of corneal inflammation and infection. Called "corneal infiltrative events," these are usually mild, but about 5 percent involve a serious infection called [microbial keratitis](#).

Bullimore found a relatively low rate of these corneal infiltrative events among youths, with one large study finding the rate of events in younger children (8 to 12) much lower than in teens aged 13 to 17.

The review also found that microbial keratitis was uncommon, with one study finding no cases in younger children, and the rate among teens similar to that of adults.

Why the difference? It's suspected that younger kids aren't showering or napping while wearing their contact lenses as often as teens do. Those behaviors increase the risk of corneal infiltrative events, according to Bullimore.

The study was published in the journal *Optometry and Vision Science*.

In a journal news release, Bullimore said the findings should reassure parents about the safety of soft contacts in children and teens. They may improve young people's self-esteem and quality of life, and have been shown to prevent or slow progression of nearsightedness in children, he said.

"The overall picture is that the incidence of corneal infiltrative events in

[children](#) is no higher than in adults, and in the youngest age range ... it may be markedly lower," Bullimore wrote in the review, adding that "greater parental supervision may also help to mitigate risks."

All soft contacts now approved for daily and overnight wear have no age restrictions, the researchers said.

**More information:** The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has more on [children and contact lenses](#).

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