

## Your eyewear and COVID-19 safety

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(HealthDay)—Coronavirus-related safety is crucial if you wear contact lenses, eyeglasses or safety glasses/goggles, experts say.

While the American Academy of Ophthalmology recommends limiting use of contact [lenses](#) and switching to [eyeglasses](#) during the pandemic, the American Optometric Association says there's no evidence that wearing contacts increases COVID-19 risk.

"With proper hand-washing prior to inserting and removing lenses, proper cleaning of lenses, and making sure you are never touching your eyes throughout the day, it is reasonable to wear contact lenses safely," said Danielle Natale, an optometrist at LifeBridge Health Krieger Eye Institute in Baltimore.

If you develop cold- or flu-like symptoms, however, stop wearing contact lenses, experts say.

The new coronavirus can spread through respiratory droplets people emit when breathing, speaking, coughing or sneezing. "So, it's best, if possible, to protect your eyes with glasses, goggles, a face shield, or some other form of eye protection," said Dr. Laura Green, an ophthalmologist at the institute.

While everyday eyeglasses protect from in front of the eyes, they may not provide adequate protection from the top, bottom and sides of frames. Safety glasses or goggles can do so, however, according to an institute news release.

The institute recommends cleaning glasses daily with a gentle soap and water, and drying them with a microfiber [lens](#) cloth.

"It's important to avoid wiping glasses with tissue paper or the hem of a shirt, or any other cloth that's not designed for cleaning lenses, because these things will cause scratches," Green said.

Wash microfiber cloths regularly. They can be hand-washed with a

gentle soap and then hung to dry.

Don't place glasses or [contact lenses](#) on any surface you aren't sure is clean and don't let others handle your glasses. Keep eyewear stored in a clean case when not in use, and Green said, don't them hang from your neck with a string holder.

"Hanging them around your neck can expose the inside part of the glasses that ends up closer to your face to droplets in the air," Green said.

**More information:** The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has more on [COVID-19](#).

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