

What are Contact Lenses?

Contact Lenses are the perfect solution for people with vision problems who do not wish to have surgery and do not like the feel and visual appearance of eyeglasses. Millions of people wear contact lenses which fit right on your eye and give you crisp, clear vision without changing your appearance. However, there are color **contact lenses** and specialty contacts that can change your appearance by giving your eyes a new color or different look. The majority of people are able to wear contacts. However, there are a few who are not able to due to high amounts of eye infections, extra sensitive eyes, and other reasons that can be determined during your contact lens evaluation. No matter what you chose, you are bound to have some fun with contacts.

The first step in getting contacts is to visit **Cottone Family Eyecare** and have a contact lense evaluation. We will measure your eyes and find the right contact to fit properly and comfortably. For people new to wearing contacts and are afraid of the thought of touching your eyes, our technicians will instruct you in insertion and removal of contact lenses. After some time, even the most sensitive of people will be able to do this with ease. Dr. Cottone will also advise you on the different types of contact lenses and how to properly take care of them and your eyes. One of the first things you will learn is if the contact lens is flipped inside out or not. You can tell by when you wear contact lenses inside out because there is a slight discomfort because the lenses do not fit properly onto your eyes. Another way to tell without even placing them in your eyes is to hold the bottom curve of the lens on one finger. If you have a perfect half circle without any edges sticking out then the contacts are fine. If it is a half circle shape with the edges sticking out, then the contact lens is flipped inside out.

Types of Contact Lenses

Hard Contact lenses

There are very few hard contact wearers today due to improvements in other types. Hard contact lenses are made of hard plastic material and come as either non-gas permeable or gas permeable. They provide clear vision and last a long time (1 to 2 years) but are harder to adjust to. They correct most vision problems. Non-gas permeable lenses do not allow oxygen to reach the cornea. These lenses have a limited wearing time because major damage can occur to the eye if no oxygen passes through to the cornea. These are no longer offered or used. Instead, gas permeable lenses offer the same advantages but also allow longer wearing time and greater comfort since oxygen can flow easily through them.

Daily wear soft contact lenses

Daily wear soft lenses are made of polymer-plastic materials that are flexible. These lenses allow oxygen to pass through to the cornea, provide great comfort, and are easy to adjust to. They can also be worn for longer periods of time and can come in different colors. Some drawbacks include a shorter life span, an inability to correct some vision problems, and a lack of durability.

Extended wear lenses

Extended wear lenses are soft lenses that have been made to allow for longer periods of time (about 7 days) without removal and cleaning. These lenses allow more oxygen to pass through to the cornea. An example of these types of lenses are Focus® NIGHT & DAY™, Purevision™, **Custom O2 Optix™**; these lenses allow for 30 nights of continuous wear and are made from silicone hydrogel that allows up to 6 times more oxygen to pass through than disposable lenses, do not dry up as much as ordinary soft contact lenses, and have a bio-compatible lens surface that decreases protein and bacteria buildup. As with all extended wear lenses there is always a chance of effecting eye health even if there are no apparent problems.

Rigid gas-permeable (RGP) lenses

Rigid gas-permeable lenses are similar to hard contact lenses but are made of better material that allows more oxygen to pass through than even soft contacts. They are made of hard plastic that gives crisp vision and corrects most vision problems. They are durable and have a longer life span than soft contact lenses. Like hard lenses they do require some time to get used to and are not recommended for highly physical activities.

Disposable lenses

Disposable lenses are designed to be worn for a limited time and then discarded. Disposables have a replacement schedule which can range from 1 day to 3 months depending on how well they are taken care of and the environment in which they are worn. Usually the typical replacement schedule is one month. Daily wear disposables lenses should be taken out daily and cleaned until the replacement schedule. Extended wear disposables lenses can be worn overnight but should still be cleaned and disinfected to prevent eye problems. Disposable lenses are more comfortable and easy to maintain because they are used till the replacement time and just thrown away.

Contact Lenses - Problem Areas

Wearing contact lenses for a long period of time may cause blurry vision, pain, and redness due to the lack of oxygen passing through to the cornea. A lack of oxygen can also change the shape of your cornea and results in uneven vision. Improper cleaning of contact lenses can result in bacterial infections which can

lead to other eye disorders & diseases. Thus it is a good rule of thumb to wear contact lenses for a limited time, clean and disinfect lenses properly, and keep your regularly scheduled appointments.

Contact Lenses - Cleaning and Disinfecting

When cleaning lenses always follow the instructions give **by Cottone Family Eyecare**. Some general guidelines should be followed for all lens types. **Always wash your hands before removing or inserting the lens**. Always use **quality lens care products** and try to clean lenses as often as possible to move buildup. **Always clean the lens case with solution and replace it every so often.**

