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New CDC Report Shows That More than 80 Percent of Contact Lens Wearers Are At Risk for an Eye Infection from Unsafe Use

-Prevent Blindness Declares October as Contact Lens Safety Awareness Month to Provide Consumers Tips to Keep Eyes Healthy -

CHICAGO (Sept. 25, 2017) – Contact lenses are a good option for many as an alternative to eyeglasses. In fact, according to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#), approximately 46 million Americans wear contact lenses.

However, the use of contact lenses also brings a higher risk of infections. Causes may include sleeping in lenses when not approved by an eye doctor, not cleaning the lenses or lens case properly, sharing lenses, or wearing contact lenses during water activities.

A new [Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report](#) from the CDC shows that more than 80 percent of contact lens wearers reported at least one behavior that put them at risk for a contact lens-related eye infection. The report broke down the rates by age groups, where 85 percent of adolescents (ages 12-17), 81 percent of young adults (ages 18-24), and 88 percent of older adults (ages 25 and older) practiced unsafe lens use.

Prevent Blindness has declared October as Contact Lens Safety Awareness Month in an effort to educate the public on the best ways to obtain, care for and use contact lenses. The non-profit group has a dedicated webpage with free information at: <http://www.preventblindness.org/wearing-contact-lenses>.

As Halloween approaches, many may be interested in wearing cosmetic contact lenses to enhance their costumes. However, all contact lenses, including prescription or cosmetic, are classified as medical devices, and it [is illegal for anyone to sell contact lenses without a prescription](#).

After obtaining a valid prescription, Prevent Blindness recommends that contact lens wearers follow an eye care professional's instructions about care and cleaning of the lenses, and to see an eye care professional for regular follow-up exams.

If the following problems are experienced, a patient should contact an eye doctor immediately:

- Unexplained eye discomfort or pain
- Redness of the eye and/or discharge

- Watering eyes
- Vision change

“We encourage anyone who is interested in wearing contact lenses to visit an eye care professional first,” said Hugh R. Parry, president and CEO of Prevent Blindness. “And, we want to remind all contact lens wearers to remember to take the necessary steps every day to care for them safely to keep their eyes healthy for years to come.”

For more information on contact lens or Halloween eye safety, please call 1-800-331-2020 or log on to www.preventblindness.org.

About Prevent Blindness

Founded in 1908, Prevent Blindness is the nation's leading volunteer eye health and safety organization dedicated to fighting blindness and saving sight. Focused on promoting a continuum of vision care, Prevent Blindness touches the lives of millions of people each year through public and professional education, advocacy, certified vision screening and training, community and patient service programs and research. These services are made possible through the generous support of the American public. Together with a network of affiliates, Prevent Blindness is committed to eliminating preventable blindness in America. For more information, or to make a contribution to the sight-saving fund, call 1-800-331-2020. Or, visit us on the Web at preventblindness.org or facebook.com/preventblindness.

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