

## Cosmetic and Decorative Contact Lens Position Statement

Prevent Blindness advises anyone purchasing cosmetic and decorative contact lenses (also known as Halloween contact lenses, fashion contact lenses, cosmetic contact lenses, colored contact lenses, and theatre contact lenses) to visit an eye care professional, such as an optometrist or an ophthalmologist, to be fitted properly and provided with a valid contact lens prescription. Selling contact lenses to a consumer without providing or requiring a valid contact lens prescription is illegal. Obtaining contact lenses without a valid contact lens prescription from a licensed eye care professional may lead to a potentially sight-threatening eye problem.

### Discussion:

There are continuing reports of the consumer accessing cosmetic contact lenses without an appropriate prescription from an eye care professional. These lenses are sold by non-eye care professionals through internet-based merchants, street vendors, flea markets, beauty supply stores, novelty stores, beach shops, tattoo parlors, and other nonprofessional commercial vendors. As of November 9, 2006, the FDA classifies **all** contact lenses – including decorative, non-corrective contact lenses designed to change the normal appearance of the eye – as medical devices.<sup>i</sup>

Contact lenses not secured through a licensed eye care professional can lead to health complications. Such problems as fungal, amoeba, and bacterial infection of the cornea and inside the eye can result, leading to permanent scarring, opacification, vision loss, and even loss of the eye. Also, corneal abrasions, eye pain, dryness, abnormal blood vessel growth, allergic reactions, and low corneal oxygen levels can result from improper use of lenses or solutions, sharing of lenses, or patients trying to take shortcuts such as using lenses for a longer time than prescribed or not using adequate cleaning and soaking solutions.

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# Cosmetic Contacts

## Position Statement

(continued)



### What Patients Need to Know:

At a minimum, a comprehensive eye examination is needed for any contact lens prescription, including cosmetic and decorative contact lenses. A comprehensive eye examination includes a measurement of the refractive error, an evaluation of the shape, health of the eye to anticipate the risk of complications, and integrity of the cornea and the associated structures of the eye as well as the quality of the tear film of the eye. Successfully fitted contact lenses have three characteristics: 1) comfortable wear, 2) clear vision, and 3) no damage to the eye. It is easy for patients to evaluate

comfort and quality of vision; however, only an eye care provider can evaluate the health of the eye. For further information about contact lens wear, visit <http://preventblindness.org/wearing-contact-lenses>.

### Approval:

This statement was approved by the Prevent Blindness Board of Directors on **September 30, 2020**.

### Review Date:

The cosmetic contact lens statement will be reviewed again in **September 2024**.

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### References

- <sup>i</sup> FDA. Guidance Document: Decorative, Non-corrective Contact Lenses Guidance for Industry, FDA Staff, Eye Care Professionals, and Consumers. 2006. Accessed on September 22, 2020 at <https://www.fda.gov/regulatory-information/search-fda-guidance-documents/decorative-non-corrective-contact-lenses>