

Back to Basics - Why is a Soft Contact lens Solution ?

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Why do we use a soft contact lens solution? This appears to be a very simple question and when asked, most of the contact lens wearers would mention cleaning, lubrication, rinsing, lens storage, disinfection & protein removal. All these are infact the reasons why contact lens wearers are recommended lens care solutions.

So what is the main function that the Contact lens solution performs?

All the functions performed by the contact lens solution are very important and have their own significance in ensuring safe & comfortable lens wear. One function that tops of the list of functions performed by contact lens solution is none other than **Disinfection**.

What is Disinfection?

Simply put disinfection is the ability of the contact lens solution to kill or limit the growth of micro organisms like bacteria and fungi within safer limits to prevent contamination of the lenses or any infections.

The reason why disinfection is the most important thing for contact lens wearers because it is directly linked with the safety of contact lens wear and cannot be substituted by external factors. For e.g.– if a contact lens solution is not able to clean well, a practitioner can recommend extra intensive cleaners to the patient, on the other hand if the contact lens solution is unable to provide enough lubrication or protein removal, the practitioner have a choice of recommending lubricating/rewetting drops or protein tablets respectively. While all the other functions performed by the multipurpose solutions can be taken care by external and additional steps but not disinfection.

Contaminated lenses are not only source of uncomfortable lens wear but pose a bigger threat of causing infections to the eye. Some of these infections can be sight threatening too. Proper disinfection is the key to maintaining health of the eye.

What are the other functions of Contact lens Solutions?

Cleaning- this function refers to digital cleaning (rub each side for 15 seconds each) and aims at removing the loosely bound deposits, debris or microorganisms on the lens surface

Rinsing- flushes off the loosely adhered debris on the lens surface. It is an important step though often a forgotten one. In some solutions that carry the **“ No Rub”** mark, it is mandatory to rinse the lenses for atleast 5 seconds each side.

Protein Removal – Contact lens solutions contain ingredients like Hydranate to actively remove proteins from the lens matrix. Depending upon on what kind of contact lenses you wear and how much protein your eyes deposit on the contact lenses, your doctor may recommend you to use protein removal enzyme tablets too along with the solution.

Lubrication- Contact lens solutions also contain lubricants that attract moisture from the atmosphere and form a film over the lens to keep it moist for longer hours. This also enhances the end-of -the- day comfort.

Role of compliance

Following the instructions given by Eye Care Professional plays a crucial role in ensuring safe & successful lens wear. Here are some of tips of How to keep your contact lens wear comfortable:-.

- Always wash and rinse your hands thoroughly before you handle your lenses.
- To avoid getting your lenses mixed up, always apply (or remove) your lenses, one at a time, in the same order.
- Never use eye drops or solutions that aren't specifically for contact lenses.
- Don't use saliva to try and wet or clean your lenses.
- Don't sleep in your lenses (unless you wear lenses that are specifically designed for continuous wear and your eye care professional has prescribed them for that wear schedule).
- Clean, rinse and disinfect your lenses every time you remove them.
- Keep all your solution bottles tightly capped when you're not using them.
- Don't let the tip of solution bottles touch any surface (including your fingers, eyes or lenses).
- Never use expired lens solutions.
- Never re-use lens solutions.
- Never swap lenses with someone else.
- Rinse your lens case every day and let it air-dry.
- Replace your lens case every three months (or more frequently).
- Don't let cosmetics like soap, makeup, moisturizers or sunscreen touch your lenses.
- Never wear your lenses when you're going to be around irritating fumes or vapors (paint, hairspray, oven cleaner, etc.)

Recently more than 100 cases of fungal corneal ulcers have been reported in patients using Renu moisture Loc solution from Bausch & Lomb. Most of these cases have been reported from USA, Singapore, Hongkong etc. we advise anyone using Renu moisture Loc to discontinue using this solution hence forth. Next time we shall talk more in detail about this series of infections.

Remember Good Habits = Good Health



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