CORE Contact Lenses and COVID-19 | Brandpoint Feature Content
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Ask the Expert: Contact Lenses, Glasses and COVID-19

(BPT) - Two out of three people worldwide rely on contact lenses or glasses, and many are now asking how COVID-19 affects their eyes. Correcting fast-spreading myths and misinformation, new research has identified a series of valuable tips for healthy wear.

Dr. Lyndon Jones, director of the Centre for Ocular Research & Education (CORE) and the world's most-published expert in contact lens research, answered five pressing questions.

1. Can I keep wearing my contact lenses during the coronavirus pandemic?

There is currently no scientific evidence that contact lens wearers have an increased risk of contracting COVID-19 compared with glasses wearers. Like always, you should consult your own eye doctor with any specific questions.

2. Should I take special care of my contacts or glasses right now?

Thorough handwashing and drying are essential. Properly wear and care for your contact lenses, making sure you practice good contact lens case hygiene. Also, regularly clean your glasses with soap and water. These habits can help you stay healthy and out of your doctor's office or the hospital.

3. Do my glasses provide protection against the virus?

There is no scientific evidence to support rumors that everyday glasses offer protection against COVID-19.

4. Should I try to avoid touching my face?

Whether you wear contact lenses, glasses or require no vision correction at all, you should avoid touching your nose, mouth and eyes with unwashed hands. This is consistent with World Health Organization (WHO) and U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations.

5. Should I stop wearing my contact lenses if I am sick?

If you are ill, temporarily stop wearing your contacts and use your glasses instead. Once you return to full health and have spoken with your eye doctor, you can start again. Make sure to use new contact lenses and a new lens case.

The peer-reviewed paper at the heart of these recommendations was authored by Dr. Jones and four other prominent ocular scientists. It was published in April 2020 in the research journal *Contact Lens & Anterior Eye* and is available alongside other eye health recommendations at COVIDEyeFacts.org.

"There has been considerable misinformation circulating about wearing contact lenses and glasses during the COVID-19 pandemic. Our goal is to make sure that science-backed truths are understood and shared, replacing fear with fact," said Dr. Jones. "Our findings indicate that contact lenses remain a perfectly acceptable form of vision correction during the coronavirus pandemic. People need to remember to practice good hand hygiene and follow appropriate wear-and-care directions, as instructed by their eye doctor."

In early April, the CDC issued updated guidance on contact lens wear during the COVID-19 pandemic, supporting key findings from the CORE-led research. The CDC also points out that personal eyeglasses and contact lenses do not qualify as personal protective equipment (PPE).

The Centre for Ocular Research & Education was established in 1988 at the University of Waterloo's School of Optometry & Vision Science in Waterloo, Ontario, Canada. It has become a thriving hub for advanced biosciences, clinical research and education, collaborating with partners in North America, Latin America, Europe and Asia-Pacific. Over three decades, CORE has been at the heart of many prominent advances in eye health, including medical devices, ocular pharmaceuticals, and digital technologies.