

# Prevent Blindness Position Statement: Cosmetic and Decorative Contact Lens



## Position Statement

Prevent Blindness advises anyone purchasing cosmetic and decorative contact lenses (such as, Halloween contact lenses and color contact lenses) to visit an eye care professional to be fitted properly with a valid prescription (It is illegal to sell or purchase contact lenses to a consumer without a valid contact lens prescription). Not doing so may lead to a potentially sight threatening eye problem.

## Discussion:

There are increasing reports of the dispensing of cosmetic contact lenses, without an appropriate prescription, by non-eye-care professionals accessed through the internet, boutiques, beach shops, tattoo parlors and other nonprofessional commercial vendors. As of November 9, 2006, the FDA updated its policy to classify all contact lenses – including decorative, non-corrective contact lenses only intended 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. Problems such as eye pain, bacterial infections and corneal ulcers with loss of vision are caused by 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.

At a minimum, a comprehensive examination for a contact lens prescription includes a measurement of the refractive error, an evaluation of the shape and integrity of the cornea and the associated structures as well as the quality of the tear film. 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 November 8, 2014.

## Review Date:

The cosmetic contact lens statement will be reviewed again in November 2016.

## References

<sup>i</sup> FDA. Medical Devices: Decorative, Non-corrective Contact Lenses. 2011. Accessed on October 9, 2013 at <http://www.fda.gov/MedicalDevices/DeviceRegulationandGuidance/GuidanceDocuments/ucm071572.htm>.

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