

COVID-19 CONSIDERATIONS ON CONTACT LENS INSERTION & REMOVAL TRAINING DURING THE PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY

As states begin to lift restrictions and health care providers begin to provide a broader array of health care services, many doctors of optometry are continuing to best provide care to their contact lens patients. There are safety precautions that should be taken with any in-office visit, provided in any medical care facility, during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Safety Precautions for Contact Lens Fitting and Training

To help protect patients and health care providers, doctors of optometry may consider the following:

1. Be mindful of potential coronavirus activity in the state, community or region.
2. Known or suspected COVID-19 patients should suspend use of contact lenses and defer routine contact lens fitting and training.
3. Prioritize hygiene, including encouraging the use of daily disposable contact lenses.
4. Due to the proximity and length of time needed to traditionally train the new contact lens wearer, consider having the patient watch a training video prior to the in-office training. This can cut down on the trainer/trainee interaction time.
5. Make certain the training area is appropriately cleaned by wiping down all surfaces with an approved disinfectant while adhering to recommendations on necessary contact time.
6. The contact lens training area should be socially distanced from all other patients and activity in the office.
7. Due to the proximity needed to properly train the first-time wearer, the contact lens technician/trainer should: 1) wear a mask, 2) wash hands immediately before and after working with the patient or apply a fresh pair of gloves, and 3) use a face-shield, goggles or safety glasses, or be separated by an appropriate sneeze guard.ⁱ
8. The patient should be masked and hands appropriately washed.
9. Once the patient has reached an appropriate level of proficiency handling the contact lenses, be certain to reiterate the appropriate wearing schedule and proper care of the lenses. Especially during this time, it's important to stress proper contact lens hygiene.
10. Stress the importance of prescribed contact lens replacement schedules and appropriate lens disposable practices emphasizing avoiding disposal of lenses into water sources such as drains or toilets. Encourage proper recycling of lens materials, cases and solutions.
11. Provide as many follow-up visits as clinically necessary virtually through an approved telemedicine platform to ensure that lenses are well-fitting.
12. Instruct patient to notify the doctor immediately if they develop pain, red eye, conjunctivitis, decrease in vision, or other ocular symptoms.

ⁱ <https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3990.pdf>