



A CUP OF HEALTH WITH CDC

Don't Sleep with Lenses

Corneal Infections Associated with Sleeping in Contact Lenses — Six Cases, United States, 2016–2018

Recorded: August 14, 2018; posted: August 16, 2018

[Announcer] This program is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

[Dr. Dooling] Welcome to *A Cup of Health with CDC*, a weekly feature of the *MMWR*, the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. I'm your host, Dr. Kathleen Dooling.

If used and maintained properly, contact lenses can be a safe, convenient alternative to glasses. But failure to remove and clean them regularly can result in serious health problems.

Dr. Jennifer Cope is with CDC's National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases. She's joining us today to discuss the importance of proper use and maintenance of contact lenses. Welcome to the show, Jennifer.

[Dr. Cope] Thank you for having me.

[Dr. Dooling] Jennifer, how many people in the U.S. wear contact lenses?

[Dr. Cope] There are approximately 45 million contact lens wearers in the United States.

[Dr. Dooling] What problems can result from improper use and maintenance of contact lenses?

[Dr. Cope] Well, there are a spectrum of problems that can result if you don't take good care of your contact lenses. Something as simple as irritation and red eyes, to an infection that might require antibiotic eye drops, to more serious infections that can result in permanent eye damage or even vision loss.

[Dr. Dooling] Is it okay to sleep while wearing contact lenses?

[Dr. Cope] Contact lens wearers should not sleep or even nap while wearing contact lenses unless they are wearing lenses that have been prescribed for sleeping by their eye doctor.

[Dr. Dooling] Give our listeners some suggestions for proper use and maintenance of contact lenses.

[Dr. Cope] Well, first as we said they should really try to avoid sleeping or napping in their contact lenses. They should also not top off the solution in their case, meaning don't add new solution to the old solution that's already in the case without dumping that out and then adding the new solution. Contact lens wearers should also change their case regularly, at least every three months or when they start a new bottle of solution.

[Dr. Dooling] How often should contact lens wearers visit an eye care professional?

[Dr. Cope] Well, the American Academy of Ophthalmologists recommends that contact lens wearers see their eye doctor at least once a year.

[Dr. Dooling] Where can listeners get more information about proper use and maintenance of contact lenses?

[Dr. Cope] Listeners can go to [cdc.gov/contactlenses](https://www.cdc.gov/contactlenses).

[Dr. Dooling] Thanks, Jennifer.

I've been talking today with Dr. Jennifer Cope about the importance of proper use and maintenance of contact lenses.

Lenses should never be worn while sleeping unless prescribed by your eye doctor. In addition, they should be cared for according to directions and stored in a clean case.

Until next time, be well. This is Dr. Kathleen Dooling for *A Cup of Health with CDC*.

[Announcer] For the most accurate health information, visit [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov) or call 1-800-CDC-INFO.