

Soft Contact Lenses

Your child has been prescribed soft contact lenses. Contact lenses are prescribed in cases of exceptionally high glasses need, damage to the front of the eye, wobbly eyes or when glasses cannot help vision improve as much as contact lenses can.

Our aim is always to help you and your child use contact lenses in the safest way possible, to allow your child to have comfortable, trouble-free vision.

Soft lenses are made of a special material that can remain in the eyes during sleep – but for improved safety, it is good practice to try and get in the habit of taking them out every night. This allows the eyes to 'breathe' and the lenses to be cleaned more regularly, reducing the risk of developing red, sore eyes and making sure that the lenses do not have protein build up so they can stay clear.

Please make sure that any contact lens solution you buy is for **soft contact lenses**.

What you will need to look after your child's contact lenses Equipment for insertion and removal of contact lenses

- Soft contact lens supply – provided by WCH
- Contact Lens cleaning solution – appropriate for type of contact lens prescribed for your child.
- Contact lens storage case
- A microfiber towel for drying your hands, and then laying on the table in front of the mirror
- Mirror
- Blanket for wrapping up your child (if 3 years and under)
- Clean hands and short, smooth fingernails
- **Please note: Suction holders do not work for soft lenses**



Your Child's Contact Lens Kit

Your child should carry with a 'contact lens kit' with them everywhere they go. This is imperative for good lens care and hygiene in case of unexpected circumstances.

What you need to purchase for your contact lens kit:

- | | | |
|---|----------|--------------------------|
| Travel size contact lens solution – <u>never refill from a larger bottle, this is no longer sterile</u> | | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Sodium chloride 0.9% ampoules | | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Small bottle of unscented, hypoallergenic soap | | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Contact lens case – <u>clean regularly, and replace 3 monthly</u> | | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Spare glasses – if your child has spare glasses | | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Your contact details – at easy reach for friends, family, carers and teachers | | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Pencil case - for storing all of your lens kit | | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Hydrogen peroxide based cleaner + case | OPTIONAL | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Spare lens | OPTIONAL | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Contact lens tweezers (silicon tipped) | OPTIONAL | <input type="checkbox"/> |

You must bring your contact lens kit to all eye appointments.

We will need to remove your child's contact lens during some appointments and we do not provide the equipment to do this.



This is one example of a 'travel contact lens kit', however you don't need to buy one ready-made – it is just as easy, and less expensive to make your own.

Inserting soft contact lenses – child under 6 years of age

Preparing to insert a soft contact lens

One – two people

1-2 minutes

1. Clean your hands with unscented soap– it does not need to be antibacterial. It's best to use a microfiber cloth to dry your hands so that lint and other fibres don't transfer into the eye and irritate it. Do not use paper towels to dry hands.
2. If they are willing, get the child to sit in a chair, and lean their head backwards slightly.
3. If they are too small to do this, wrap them using the instructions below.
4. Remove contact lens from the lens case using the tip of the index finger on your dominant hand. i.e. if you are right handed, use your right hand.
5. Inspect the lens in a well-lit area, ensuring that is the correct way around (Figure 2). If the sides are rolled along the edge or folded up, then they're inside out.
6. With your other hand, hold the child's upper and lower eyelids open with your fingers.
7. Try to hold the eyelid at the base of your child's eyelashes if you can, because this will stop the eye closing when they attempt to blink.
8. Place the lens directly onto the coloured part of the eye, and release the upper eye lid to help it sit in the right place. Gently release the lower eye lid.

The Raising Children Network recommends following the instructions below, to make sure you are using the safest way possible to wrap your child for inserting and removing their contact lenses.

1. Use a lightweight **cotton or muslin wrap**. Fold the top edge down by about 20 cm. Lay baby with shoulders in line with the fold.
2. Place one of your baby's hands under the fold.
3. Bring the edge of the wrap across the body. Tuck it under your baby's legs.
4. Place the other hand under the fold.
5. Bring the other edge of the wrap across baby's body. Tuck in under your baby's back.
6. Fold any extra length up and under your baby's legs. Wrap firmly, but **make sure that the wrap isn't too tight** and that baby can fully stretch out his legs. Wrapping the legs and chest too tightly can lead to hip and breathing problems.

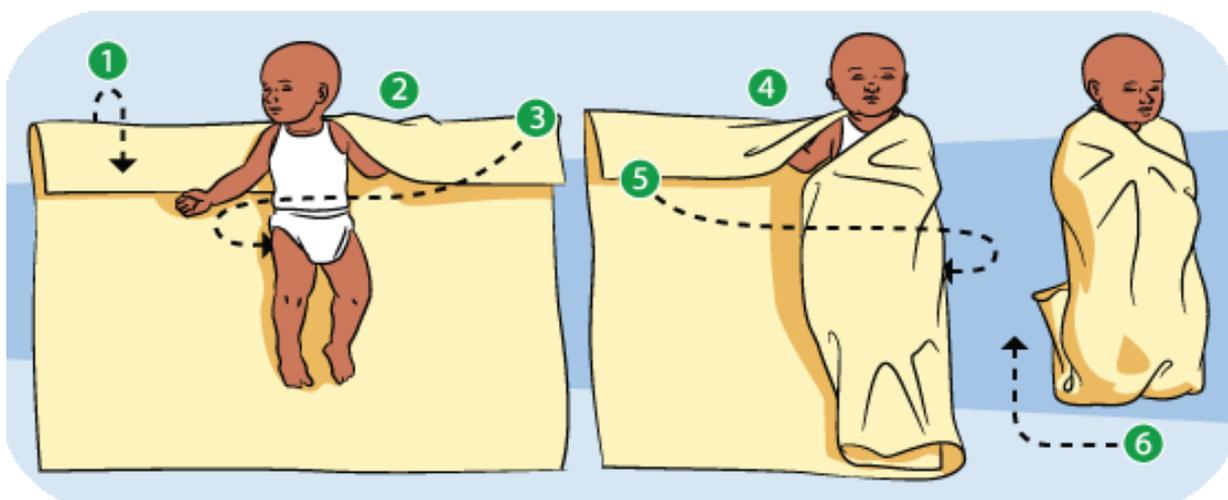


Figure 1 – How to safely wrap a baby

Source: <https://raisingchildren.net.au/newborns/sleep/settling-routines/wrapping-in-pictures>

Inserting soft contact lenses – child over 6 years of age

Preparing to insert a soft contact lens

Your child will need your help to start with, but ultimately will be able to do alone. Some children will need ongoing support and supervision, and this is always done at the parents' discretion.

1-2 minutes

1. Clean your hands with unscented soap– it does not need to be antibacterial. It's best to use a microfiber cloth to dry your hands so that lint and other fibres don't transfer into the eye and irritate it. Do not use paper towels to dry hands.
2. Clear a work area in front of a mirror, and place down a clean microfiber towel/cloth.
3. If working near a sink, put the plug in – just in case!
4. Get the child to sit down in front of a mirror at an appropriate height so they can see their eyes easily
5. Remove contact lens from the lens case using the tip of the index finger of your dominant hand
6. Inspect the lens in a well-lit area, ensuring that is the correct way around (Figure 2). If the sides are rolled up along the edge or folded up, then check they whether they are inside out.
7. The patient will need to hold open their lower eyelid; this is easiest when the chin is down.
8. Place the lens directly onto the eye. Release the lower eye lid first, and then gently release the upper lid.
9. If you are unsure if the lens is in place, simply ask your child to cover their other eye up and ask if they can see clearly.

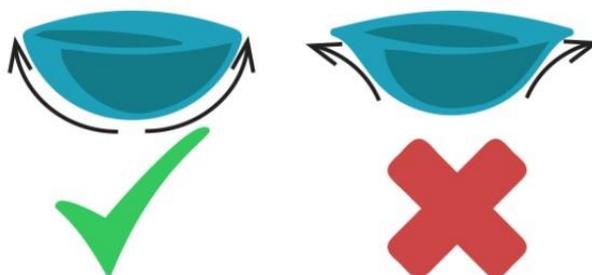


Figure 2: Soft contact lenses. What is the right way round and the wrong way round?

Source: <https://www.lenstore.co.uk/eyecare/how-check-if-your-contact-lenses-are-inside-out>

Removing soft contact lenses

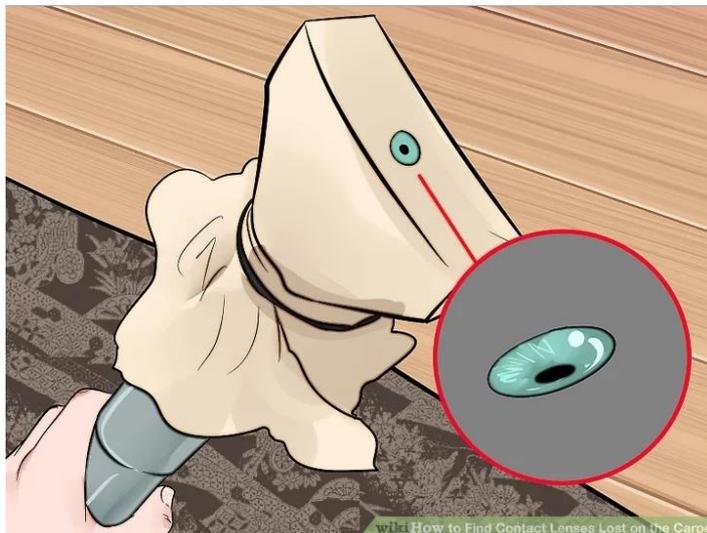
1. Clean your hands with unscented soap – it does not need to be antibacterial. Dry them using a microfiber cloth, as otherwise fibres from the cloth will transfer into the eye and irritate it. Do not use paper towels to dry hands
2. Check that the lens is in place before attempting removal
3. Clear a work area and place down a clean microfiber towel/cloth
4. If removing the lens near a sink, put the plug in – just in case!
5. Ask the child to look up at the ceiling. Use your middle finger to slide the lens on to the white of the eye, then lens can then be gently pinched off using the thumb and index finger.
or
6. Place one finger on the upper lid, and one finger on the lower lid. Press down gently onto the child's eye and then slowly bring the lids together and the contact lens will eject from the eye.
7. Once removed, follow the instructions on how to clean your lens.

Finding a dropped lens

1. Do not move before checking the surrounding area
2. Check your child's face
3. Check folds in clothing – both your child's and your own
4. Before walking away, carefully look where you are treading
5. Use a torch held low and sweep across the area of suspected loss. The shiny lens surface will often then catch the light



6. If all else fails, use a vacuum cleaner and cover the end of the pipe with an old pair of tights/stockings and carefully go over the area where you were working. The lens will stick to the end



7. Check the lens for any scratches or chips to the edge of the lens
8. Clean the lens before reinserting into the eye

Cleaning Contact Lenses

Never use tap water for cleaning or to store lenses in, only use contact lens solution appropriate for the soft lenses. Tap water contains a type of bug that can be very harmful to eyes.

The solutions listed below are available at most larger pharmacies, local optometrists and online.

Soft contact lens solutions – Daily cleaning solutions



Opti-Free Pure Moist®



Complete® Easy-Rub



BioTrue®



Re-nu® Sensitive



Re-nu® Fresh

Soft contact lens solutions – Hydrogen peroxide based cleaners



Oxysept®



EasySept®



AOSept®

Soft contact lens solutions – Sterile saline for rinsing out your container



Lens Plus® saline



Sodium Chloride 0.9% (sachet or ampoule)



Reclens®

Cleaning your child's contact lens

Cleaning your child's contact lenses is extremely important. Soft contact lenses should be cleaned a minimum of 1-2 times a week – the safest method is to clean them every night. Not cleaning lenses often enough increases the risk of getting an eye infection.

Cleaning your lens – non-hydrogen peroxide based cleaners

1. Clean your hands with unscented soap– it does not need to be antibacterial
2. Remove contact lens from the lens case using the tip of your index finger
3. Place lens on the palm of your non-dominant hand, rounded side down
4. Place a drop of cleaning solution on the bowl of the lens and another drop onto the palm of your hand
5. Massage the lens gently with your index finger of your other hand for 10-15 seconds. This will ensure that both surfaces of the lens are thoroughly cleaned.
6. Place lens on end of index finger, with your thumb, rub the convex surface of the lens for 10-15 seconds. Avoid fingernail contact to prevent lens damage and contamination
7. Replace them into the storage container, or insert them into your child's eye.
8. If you are not regularly using lenses for your child, and they are being stored for long periods of time, it is best to completely replace the solution every 1-2 weeks.
9. If it has been more than 1-2 weeks since last inserting the lenses, please clean them again before use

Cleaning your lens – hydrogen peroxide based cleaners

1. Clean your hands with unscented soap– it does not need to be antibacterial
2. Place contact lens into the correct side of the basket, repeat for the other eye (if applicable)
3. Pour the liquid into the container up to the marked fill line.
4. Submerge the basket containing the contact lenses into the liquid, and screw the lid shut
5. Some types of hydrogen peroxide cleaner require a separate neutralisation step (such as putting a tablet into the solution). Wait for 6 hours for the entire cleaning and neutralisation process to complete – **please read your specific brand of cleaner's instructions and follow them exactly.**
6. Please note that hydrogen peroxide containers have a small 'gas release' hole at the top and therefore may leak when being transported.
7. If your hydrogen peroxide cleaner is "self-neutralising" you will need to replace the grey disc at the bottom of the container when it stops fizzing on insertion into the liquid, or every 3 months. If you do not do this, the lenses will sting when inserted due to incomplete neutralisation of the hydrogen peroxide.



Image 1 Source: <https://www.ebay.co.uk/itm/Ciba-vision-AOsept-AODISC-neutralizer-vertical-contact-lens-case-w-cloth-lot-NEW-/190863599558>

Image 2 Source: <https://www.fda.gov/medicaldevices/productsandmedicalprocedures/homehealthandconsumer/consumerproducts/contactlenses/ucm482480.htm>

Cleaning your lens case

Lens cases should be cleaned a minimum of once a week with the storage solution or sterile saline.

1. Clean your hands with unscented soap– it does not need to be antibacterial
2. Dump out any remaining solution left in the case
3. Rub the inside of the case with your index finger for a minimum of 5 seconds.
4. Do this for both sides of the case, if used.
5. Fill with fresh contact lens solution, or sterile saline, and then discard this liquid.
6. Dry case with a clean tissue
7. Place the case upside down on a clean tissue to dry
8. Allow the case to fully air dry before refilling with solution and putting the caps back on.
9. Replace your contact lens case at least 3 monthly, to reduce the risk of contamination/infection.



Image Source 1 - <https://www.wikihow.com/Clean-a-Contact-Lens-Case> - accessed 4/4/19

Useful videos – showing caregiver’s managing contact lenses in their young children

Have a look at Eye Power Kids Wear’s website <https://eyepowerkidswear.com/>. The sections called Infant Contacts 101 and 102 are a great resource for tips and tricks about how to use contact lenses – please note the type of lenses her child uses “silsoft”, are not available in Australia.

[“How to Remove Contacts from a baby”](#) – Youtube video

[“How to put a contact lens in a baby – with explanation”](#) – Youtube video

[“Jamie’s contacts”](#) – Youtube video

[“Contact lens for a baby”](#) – Youtube video

[“How to remove contacts from a baby – with explanation”](#) – Youtube video

What do I do if my child has problems with their contact lenses?

Sore Eyes

1. Sore eye with contact lens in place
 - a. Remove the lens immediately
 - b. Inspect the lens for cracks, scratches and foreign particles.
 - c. Clean the lens if you suspect foreign particles
 - d. Put the lens away if there is a crack, and phone the eye team. Depending on its age, we can send it back to the manufacturer for a replacement.
 - e. Without the contact lens in, see if the eye returns back to normal. If this does not happen, see overleaf for contact details for the eye team.
2. If your child's eyes look sore or uncomfortable before insertion of lenses
 - a. Do not put lens in
 - b. See if eye settles on its own
 - c. If not, go to your GP. Your child may have conjunctivitis.
 - d. If there is any suspicion of other issues occurring, contact the eye team at Women's and Children's Hospital.
3. In all of the above cases, if you have a young child (under 5) who develops one sore eye but wears contact lenses in both eyes, remove both lenses and phone your eye doctor. We can advise in your child's specific circumstances whether it is better to continue without both until the eye has healed.

Lens not staying in the right place

1. Contact the eye secretary and leave a message about the problem you are having (details on last page).
2. One of the eye team will get back to you as soon as possible and discuss things further. We can then potentially arrange to bring forward your appointments with the eye doctor or optometrist depending on your child's exact circumstances.

Lens falling out constantly

1. Contact the eye secretary and leave a message about the problem you are having (details on last page).
2. One of the eye team will get back to you as soon as possible and discuss things further. If the lenses have been lost after it fell out, we can order you another lens.
3. In those cases where your child has recently lost a higher than normal number of lenses, the clinician on the phone will arrange for your child to have a contact lens clinic appointment sooner to identify the cause of the increase in lenses being lost/falling out.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is a contact lens?

A contact lens is a thin piece of plastic which you put onto the coloured part of your eye. It does the same job as wearing glasses.

2. Do contact lenses hurt?

Some lenses can be a bit uncomfortable initially, but children are very adaptable and within a few minutes they get used to the sensation and then they are unaware they are in place.

3. What are contact lenses made of?

Contact lenses are made of plastic (they are never made of glass), and there are 2 main types: hard and soft lenses.

Soft contact lenses are made of soft plastic like jelly. These lenses bend when you hold them, which is why you need to be aware of whether they are inside out or not. They always need to be stored in a special solution to stop them from drying out. If they do dry out they will shrivel up.

Hard contact lenses don't bend when you hold them. They are often called "rigid gas permeable" or RGP.

4. Will my contact lenses get lost in my eyes?

If your child rubs their eyes, the lenses may move around on your child's eyes or they can fall out, so it is better not to allow your child to rub their eyes when wearing contact lenses.

Lenses won't get lost inside your eyes, and they cannot go behind your eyeball.

If the lens is lost, check under your child's upper eyelid – this is the most likely place you will find them if they haven't fallen out. Please check here before phoning up to reorder contact lenses. If this happens persistently, your child needs to come in for a contact lens appointment to refit them.

5. Can my contact lenses break?

They can break. This is most likely to happen when you are cleaning them, so you have to be very careful when you hold them and not put too much pressure on them. They are not likely to break in your child's eyes.

6. Can I wear my contact lenses for swimming?

No, you should never let your child wear contact lenses for swimming

7. Will I still have glasses?

In children, the majority of patients will have a pair of spare glasses just in case. For those babies who are prescribed contact lenses after cataract surgery, the lens strength is so high we often do not prescribe a backup pair of glasses. We provide you with additional contact lenses instead.

If your child has had an operation to remove the lens of the eye, and is wearing a contact lens to correct their vision, they will need reading glasses from around age 4 onwards to help them to read. Until then their contact lenses are made so they see best at around 1-2 metres away.

8. Will contact lenses change the colour of my eyes?

No, our contact lenses are not designed to change the colour of your eyes. They are for vision only.

9. Can I bathe or shower with contact lenses in?

As an adult, you should always remove your contact lenses for bathing and showering as you need to minimise contact lens exposure to tap water.

However, with a baby, if you are careful when you bathe them, you can avoid needing to remove their lenses.

If a significant amount of tap water gets in your child's eyes when they are wearing their contact lenses, please remove them, clean and disinfect the lens, and replace with your spare lens.

Contact Lenses from Women's and Children's Hospital
Useful Phone Numbers:

(08) 8161 8308

Working Days: **Monday –Thursday**

Working Hours: **8.30am – 4.30pm**

- To order contact lenses, phone the number above for the ophthalmology secretary – leave your child's name, medical record number (6 digit number on the sticker below), date of birth and a contact phone number.
- Tell the ophthalmology secretary what you would like to order.
- One of the orthoptic team will get to your request as soon as possible.

If you are having problems Monday-Friday, 8.30am –4.30pm ring the Women's and Children's Hospital on (08) 8161 7000 and ask to speak to the ophthalmology registrar (Pager 4032)

Out of these hours, present to your local Emergency Department where an ophthalmology registrar can be called.

Eye Consultant:_____

Eye: Right Eye Left Eye Both

The general rule with contact lenses in children:

IF IN DOUBT, LEAVE IT OUT

[For more information](#)

Ophthalmology Department
Surgical Services
Level 2, Good Friday Building
Women's and Children's Hospital
North Adelaide, 5006
Telephone: (08) 8161 8308



www.ausgoal.gov.au/creative-commons



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