

EYE CARE PROFESSIONAL GUIDANCE

Dear Eye Care Practitioner

This document suggests what you may wish to communicate to your patient whilst discussing contact lens wear and fitting them, to make sure they understand the implications of wearing lenses and how best to avoid 'drop outs' and complications.

Promotion of services and practice

Promote that almost all visual defects can be corrected with contact lenses.

Have leaflet information on the different types of lenses available and the services you offer.

Explain the importance of the initial discussion and clinical examination prior to the actual fitting.

Give clear information about your cost structure: what are the material prices and fitting fees, what will the patient get for their money and how much should they expect to be charged for their aftercare (follow ups). The patient must be informed about the importance of regular aftercare while they continue to wear lenses. Make sure all care and handling information above will be repeated at the end of the fitting process and will be given in a written form.

How do you proceed?

Take the professional decision for the type of contact lenses that best meets their needs. Define the chosen replacement schedule and modality of wear for the lenses chosen and tell why.

Explain what happens during the 'Fitting' of contact lenses'. During this process you will insert trial lenses of a specific brand (with specific characteristics) of the chosen contact lens type. You will then evaluate the lenses' on-eye performance with regards to vision, how well they work with the eyes' topography and anatomy to ensure long term eye health, and their comfort. The wearer should value this process and understand that not all lenses of the same type, soft or rigid, are the same; they don't perform the same on a given eye, even though they may bear the same numbers on the box. This makes the person understand that they should not substitute the fitted contact lens brand with another without consulting you.

Specific care products should be given and care procedures explained in detail. Reinforce even at the aftercare visits that strict obedience to the wearing and replacement patterns, as well as care regimen, will reduce the risk of infection and will maintain the visual quality and comfort of their contact lenses. Again, not all care products are the same. Changing the care product may result in discomfort, lower vision etc.

Discuss the following items to demonstrate professionalism and care of the patient

- Never use tap nor mineral water to clean, rinse or store contact lenses; even not pure water.
- It is advised not to wear lenses when swimming, use swimming goggles instead. If it is necessary to wear lenses, then daily disposable are the ones of choice. Lenses should not be removed right after leaving the water. Wait until the tear film has re-established and then remove with clean and dry hands (and discard daily disposables, use new ones). If reusable lenses are used, advise to clean and disinfect them.
- Never sleep in contact lenses without the approval/advice of you, their practitioner.
- Check that any eye drops to be used are compatible with contact lens wear.
- Give information how medicines can influence contact lens wear.

Potential for complications

Explain that complications are not very common and usually minor. They are often linked to the end of a contact lens's life. Make them aware that not dealing with minor problems may result in major complications that can lead to devastating infections, which may cause scarring or loss of sight. They may occur despite keeping to the instructions; so it is important to respond in the indicated way which is take out and check lenses and eyes then re-condition the lenses. If not better they must stop lens wear and see you. Discuss that prolonged wear of contact lenses, poor hygiene and compliance will significantly raise the risk of complications.

Legal implications

Give a specification (contact lens brand and parameters, as well as care products) when the fitting has been accomplished and explain why it is time limited. The specification of the contact lenses and products should never be changed without practitioner advice. Good record keeping is the best defense in a potential lawsuit.
