Moorfields Eye Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

Patient information – contact lens service

Care of your bandage contact lenses

It has been recommended that you wear a bandage lens (also known as a therapeutic contact lens) as part of the treatment for your eye condition. Please read this leaflet carefully as it will instruct you on how best to take care of your lens as well as answering frequently asked questions. If you require further information, please contact us using the details below.

Contact lens orders:
Phone: 020 7566 2100, Monday - Friday, 9am– 5pm
Email: moorfields.contactlenses@nhs.net
Visit: Clinic 4, contact lens reception desk (Monday to Friday, 9am–4.45pm).
Contact lens appointments:
Phone: 020 7566 2475, Monday–Friday, 8.00am– 5.00pm

What is a bandage contact lens?

A bandage lens is a therapeutic contact lens (usually soft) which you wear in your eye for an extended period of time. It is worn to protect the front part of the eye (the cornea) during healing. Reduced tear production overnight means the eyes are often dry in the morning and more prone to damage from the movement of the lids. Your therapeutic contact lens protects your eye from any damage caused by the mechanical rubbing of the eyelids (which occurs naturally when blinking), as well as the natural movement of the eyes opening first thing in the morning. Wearing therapeutic lenses should make your eye feel more comfortable and relieve any eye pain. The lenses provide a smooth barrier between the eyelids and cornea which promotes and aids corneal healing.

Will wearing these lenses improve my vision?

Therapeutic lenses are non prescription lenses since the main goal of treatment is to heal, not improve vision. Vision may improve as a result of the cornea healing and a smoother surface provided by the lens. This is because irregular corneal surfaces scatter light and reduce the ability to see clearly and sharply.

Will I feel anything when wearing the lenses?

You may feel the lens when it is first inserted, but this sensation settles after

a few minutes. Most patients find bandage lenses are comfortable and report having little to no awareness of the lens being in the eye.
Following overnight wear, it is common to experience symptoms of dry eye. This is usually easily treated with artificial (preservative free) tear drops. Your contact lens practitioner or ophthalmologist will recommend which drops to purchase from our pharmacy, but these can also be purchased over the counter at most external pharmacies.
Occasionally, the lens may move out of place or fall out. This is not an emergency, however you should contact the contact lens clinic if you think this has happened. If you have a local optometrist, then they may also be able to help.

Will I need to care for the lenses at home?

You will not normally be expected to handle the contact lens yourself. You will see an optometrist at regular intervals to remove and replace the lens and check the front surface of your eye. If you need the lens for long-term treatment, then we may give you instructions on how to insert and remove the lens yourself, in order to reduce the number of appointments you have to attend. **Please note- you must only do this when you have received the appropriate training and you have been told it is safe to do so independently.**

Will I have to pay for my lenses?

No, as the cost of therapeutic contact lenses is covered by the NHS.

Are there risks associated with wearing these lenses?

There is a small risk of infection associated with all contact lens wear. This risk in overnight wear is around 20 cases per 10,000* and is slightly higher when the lens is worn for therapeutic reasons. However, we usually find the benefits outweigh the risks.

*Jones, L., Walsh, K., Willcox, M., Morgan, P. and Nichols, J., 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic: Important considerations for contact lens practitioners. Contact Lens and Anterior Eye, 43(3), pp.196-203.

Please note:

- To minimise the risk of infection you should always ensure your hands are clean before touching your eyes and avoid water coming into contact with the lenses. Take care when showering and avoid swimming.
- If you experience redness, discharge, pain or decreased vision then you should attend Moorfields A&E in City Road immediately (open 24/7 for emergency eye problems only). Alternatively, you can go to your local A&E department. Please tell the clinician you see that you are wearing a bandage contact lens.

Can I still use my prescribed eye medication while wearing the lenses?

Yes, you must continue to use **all** prescribed eye medications while

wearing the therapeutic lens. If available, preservative free alternatives will be prescribed to reduce preservative build up in the lens. These are safe to use with therapeutic lenses.

Can I wear eye make up while I have the lenses in?

You can wear eye makeup while you have the lenses in, but the following important steps should be taken:

- Wash your hands before applying makeup, especially to the eye area.
- Avoid make up going into your eye - do not use kohl liner on your inner eyelid.
- Wash eye make up brushes regularly.
- Do not share eye make up products and replace them regularly.
- Use non-oil based eye make up removers.

When to seek help

- As mentioned previously, if your eye suddenly becomes red, painful or your vision worsens, please go to Moorfields A&E department in City Road immediately (open 24/7 for eye emergencies only). Alternatively, you can go to your local A&E department to be seen.
  It is very important you tell the clinician you see that you are wearing a bandage contact lens.

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City Road, London EC1V 2PD
Phone: 020 7253 3411
www.moorfields.nhs.uk

Moorfields Direct telephone helpline

Phone: 020 7566 2345
Monday-Friday, 8.30am-9pm
Saturday, 9am-5pm
Information and advice on eye conditions and treatments from experienced ophthalmic-trained nurses.

Patient advice and liaison service (PALS)

Phone: 020 7566 2324/ 020 7566 2325
Email: moorfields.pals@nhs.net
Moorfields' PALS team provides confidential advice and support to help you with any concerns you may have about the care we provide, guiding you through the different services available at Moorfields. The PALS team can also advise you on how to make a complaint.

Your right to treatment within 18 weeks

Under the NHS constitution, all patients have the right to begin consultant-led treatment within 18 weeks of being referred by their GP. Moorfields is committed to fulfilling this right, but if you feel that we have failed to do so, please contact our patient advice and liaison service (PALS) who will be able to advise you further (see above). For more information about your rights under the NHS constitution, visit www.nhs.uk/choiceinthenhs