



## Special Notice – COVID-19 Protections for Contact Lens Wearers

### Top Contact Lens Experts Dispel Misinformation Regarding Coronavirus / COVID-19 Protections for Contact Lens Wearers

*Research scientists in Canada, United Kingdom and United States share guidance on safe wear and handling; thorough hand washing and disinfection compliance are important*

Three of the world's most published researchers in eye health are responding to misinformation circulating regarding contact lens and spectacles/glasses wear amidst Novel Coronavirus / COVID-19 pandemic.

[Lyndon Jones](#), FIAACLE and director of the Centre for Ocular Research & Education (CORE) at the University of Waterloo (Canada); [Philip Morgan](#), IACLE Vice President and director of Eurolens Research at The University of Manchester (United Kingdom); and [Jason Nichols](#), Associate Vice President Research and Professor at the University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Optometry (United States) and editor in chief of Contact Lens Spectrum are advising eye care professionals and consumers to heed sound, evidence-based practices.

- **Contact Lens Wear is Safe.** Despite myths and misinformation that have arisen over the past 48 hours, contact lens wear remains a safe and highly effective form of vision correction for millions of people worldwide.
- **Proper Hand Washing is Essential.** When using contact lenses or spectacles, careful and thorough hand washing with soap and water followed by hand drying with unused paper towels is paramount. For contact lens wearers, this should occur before every insertion and removal.
- **Disinfect Contact Lenses.** Contact lens wearers should either dispose of their daily disposable lenses each evening, or regularly disinfect their monthly and

two-week lenses according to manufacturer and eye care professional instructions.

– **Disinfect Spectacles and Glasses.** Some viruses such as COVID-19 can remain on hard surfaces for hours to days, which can be transferred to spectacles wearers' fingers and faces. This especially holds true for presbyopes (people generally over the age of 40). Most presbyopes require reading glasses and they may be putting them on and off their face multiple times a day. This age group appears to be among the more vulnerable population for developing COVID-19, as compared with contact lens wearers, who are typically younger.

– **Discontinue Lens Wear Only if Sick.** Ceasing contact lens wear when sick is advised, consistent with guidance for other types of illness.

– **Spectacles are Not Proven to Offer Protection.** There is no scientific evidence that wearing spectacles or glasses provide protection against COVID-19 or other viral transmissions.

A recent peer-reviewed paper published in [Contact Lens and Anterior Eye](#) draws attention to how hand washing habits could affect the development of contact lens related microbial keratitis and corneal inflammatory events.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and World Health Organization recommend that people clean their hands often to reduce their risk of contracting the virus. Specifically, they advise all people to:

– Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.

– If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry.

– Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

– Use approved personal protective eyewear (medical masks, goggles or face shields) in certain settings involved in the care of

patients ([https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/331215/WHO-2019-nCov-IPCPPE\\_use-2020.1-eng.pdf](https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/331215/WHO-2019-nCov-IPCPPE_use-2020.1-eng.pdf)).

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