

Sleeping in Contact Lenses

With the arrival of extended wear contact lenses on the market, contact lenses that advertise the safety of being worn for thirty days in a row and allowing you to sleep in them, the question arises often on whether it is really safe to do this or not. Those that have been wearing contact lenses for years have always been told of the importance of taking them out before bedtime, and have often heard the stories of people that woke up the next morning only to find out that their eyes are stuck shut, or the lenses are stuck to their eye. The question remains, is it safe to sleep in extended wear contact lenses?

A study was conducted at the University of Manchester on just this very subject. The researchers determined that there was increased risk of developing keratitis (an inflammation of the cornea) for those who did not take out their contact lenses before they went to bed for the night. The extent of the damage was dependent on what type of contact lenses were being worn during the night.

Traditional soft contact lenses (hydrogel lenses) proved to be more damaging to the wearer than extended wear contact lenses (silicone hydrogel lenses), in fact, five times more damaging. For the study, patients that wore soft contact lenses, extended wear contact lenses, daily disposable contact lenses, and rigid lenses, that reported acute eye problems were studied. It was then determined that those sleeping in their lenses carried the most risk, and that of those sleeping in their lenses, the extended wear [contact lenses](#) seemed to be the best choice.

It should be pointed out that extended wear contact lenses were designed with the purpose of possibly being worn for thirty days without removal. This becomes possible with more oxygen being allowed through to the cornea. In fact, these contact lenses allow six to seven times the amount of oxygen to the cornea than traditional soft contact lenses. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has determined the extended wear contact lenses safe to sleep in at night, yet this is based on a study that showed that less than .18% people experienced keratitis, meaning they still carry a risk, although it is small.

This all brings us back to the original question, is it safe to sleep in contact lenses? It has to be noted that not only does everyone not have the same prescription for their eyes, they also all have different lifestyles, conditions, and needs. From looking at the studies, it's going to be done, it should obviously be in extended wear contact lenses that are meant for that very purpose. Yet, while some people may be able to sleep in extended wear contact lenses for thirty days with no problems, others might be included in that .18% that will experience difficulty.

Only your eye care professional and you can decide if sleeping in your lenses is safe for you, depending on your prescription, lifestyle, and needs. Perhaps the answer is not sleeping in them for thirty days continuously, but for fifteen days or one week even. If you do decide that extended wear contact lenses are for you, AC Lens carries a lens perfect for you that both you and your eye care professional can agree on.

About the Author

Laura Tucker is a 42-year-old freelance writer and mother of two. For the past two years, she has been a featured writer at realityshack.com, covering recaps and commentary on American Idol, The Amazing Race, and Big Brother, among others. Laura has also written content for many other websites and has had one of her movie reviews published in a print magazine. In her spare time, she enjoys martial arts as an instructor and student and obtained her black belt in 2006. Laura wrote this article about [contact lens](#) for AC Lens.com.

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