

Department of Optometry, Oxford Eye Hospital

# Bandage Contact Lenses

Information for patients



# What is a bandage contact lens?

A bandage contact lens protects an injured or diseased cornea from the mechanical rubbing of the blinking eyelids, therefore allowing it to heal. It is a normal (usually soft, but not always) contact lens that has no power. It is not intended to improve your vision.

## The aims of a bandage contact lens are to:

- Relieve some causes of eye pain
- Promote healing of the cornea
- Mechanical protection and support
- Maintenance of moist corneal surface

They can also help in stabilizing wounds, cuts and holes in the cornea by reducing pain and preventing secondary corneal infection by acting as a barrier to microbes (bacteria / germs).

## **Common conditions in which bandage contact lenses are used:**

Bullous keratopathy	Chemical injuries
Dry eyes	Post-surgery
Corneal ulcers	Exposure
Corneal erosion	Trauma
Keratitis	Corneal oedema
Trichiasis	Corneal dystrophies
Some forms of laser refractive surgery	

The optimum type of bandage contact lens will vary on the condition and will be chosen by your optometrist.

## **Will I feel the lens?**

You should be aware of the lens when it is inserted but as we generally use soft contact lenses they should settle and become comfortable after a few minutes.

## **How do I change the lens?**

At first most patients will not be expected to handle the contact lens at all. The contact lens will be inserted by an optometrist at the hospital and you will wear the lens constantly until your next appointment – when the

optometrist will change the lens for you. Most people only need the contact lens for a short period and so do not need to handle the lens at all themselves.

Occasionally patients need to wear their bandage contact lens on a longer term basis. In these cases we may instruct patients how to handle the lens themselves.

## Do I have to pay for my bandage contact lens?

As the bandage contact lens is fitted for a medical purpose and not a cosmetic or refractive purpose, you will not have to pay for it.

## What is the risk of complications and side effects?

### **Complications that may arise as a result of wearing a bandage contact lens:**

1. After sleeping in your bandage contact lens, your eyes will feel dry first thing in the morning. In order to combat that, we recommend applying artificial tears or ocular lubricants to both eyes before going to bed and then again when you wake up.

**NB: If you notice that your vision is more hazy in the morning than it was the night before – contact us immediately.**

2. Occasionally a minority of patients may notice that their lens becomes dislodged or even falls out. If you are worried that this has happened to you, please contact us.
3. Continuous wear contact lenses can increase your risk of developing an eye infection. It is therefore essential that you maintain good hygiene:
  - **ALWAYS** ensure hands are clean and dry before touching your eyes.
  - **AVOID** getting water into your eyes.
  - **NO** swimming while wearing your contact lenses.

**NB: If your eye becomes:**

- **More red**
- **More painful (rather than improving)**
- **Sticky**
- **You notice discharge/ watering**
- **Deterioration in vision.**

**CONTACT US IMMEDIATELY**

# Can I use eye drops with my bandage contact lens?

If your ophthalmologist or doctor has prescribed eye drops for whatever reason it is essential that you continue to use these drops as directed. While you are wearing your contact lens it is advisable to ask for the preservative-free variety of any of the drops you are taking.

If you use artificial tears to improve eye comfort, you must obtain drops which are preservative-free.

# Can I wear eye makeup with my contact lenses?

Yes you can by following the advice below:

- **ALWAYS wash hands thoroughly before touching eyes to avoid transferring oils, creams or lotions onto the contact lens.**
- **Use only non-allergenic makeup.**
- **Cream eye shadow is less likely to get into your eyes than powder. However, they can irritate your eyes more if they do get in. Choose water-based rather than oil-based creams.**
- **If you prefer powder, keep eyes closed during application, then brush off any excess before opening your eye.**

- **Never apply eyeliner between your lashes and your eye. Only apply it to the portion of the lashes that is well away from your eye.**
- **To remove makeup, wash and dry hands and use your eye makeup remover.**
- **Replace your eye make up FREQUENTLY at least every 3months. Bacteria can get into the product and build up overtime thereby increasing the risk of infection if it gets into your eye.**
- **Never share eye makeup.**

## Attending your appointments

When you come to your contact lens appointment please wear your contact lenses – unless your optometrist has advised otherwise, or you have problems with the lenses which prevents you from wearing them.

Always keep your contact lens aftercare appointments. If the time is inconvenient please contact the Call Centre on 01865 231405 to re-arrange the appointment.

Scleral lens patients should rearrange their appointments on 01865 234740 stating they need a scleral lens appointment.

# What to do if you have a problem

If either eye is red, sticky or uncomfortable contact:

## **Eye Casualty**

Monday to Friday 8am to 5pm

Saturday and Sunday 9am to 4pm

on **01865 234800**.

## **Optometry Department –**

Monday to Friday 9.15am to 5pm

on **01865 234740**

**Out of hours – Please contact your GP.**

If you need an interpreter or need a document in another language, large print, Braille or audio version, please call **01865 221473** or email **PALSJR@orh.nhs.uk**

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