

Information for parents about
Paediatric Contact Lenses

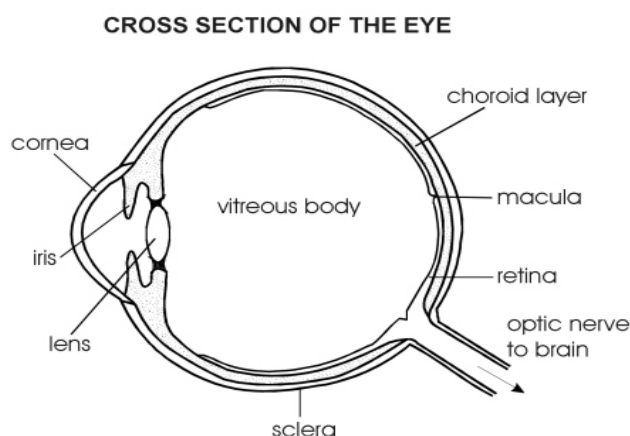
**Contact Lens Department
Gartnavel General Hospital
Great Western Road
Glasgow G12 0YN
Telephone: 0141 211 1043**

As your child has had surgery to remove a cataract they will need to wear contact lenses or glasses. This leaflet will give you information about:

- Inserting contact lenses
- Removing contact lenses
- Cleaning contact lenses
- Problems with contact lenses

What is a cataract?

The eye works a bit like a camera. It contains a lens which helps focus images onto the back of the eye called the retina, which acts like the film in a camera. When a cataract is present the lens is cloudy and white, instead of being clear and transparent, and therefore prevents light and images reaching the retina.



After Cataract Surgery

Your child has had cataract surgery to remove the white lens to allow light to reach the retina. However their vision will be blurred as they are no longer able to focus properly on their own. Therefore, we need to help them focus, this may involve:

- An Intra Ocular Lens Implant (IOL)
- Glasses (spectacles)
- Contact Lenses

Usually your child will need a combination of these.

Intra Ocular Lens Implant (IOL)

This is a new plastic lens that we place inside the eye. (This is not suitable for young babies). Your child will still need glasses or contact lenses as their eye continues to grow.

Glasses

Glasses may be suitable if your baby has had cataracts removed from both eyes.

Glasses for babies can be very thick and heavy and may not fit very well, therefore, we prefer contact lenses. Usually glasses are a back up when your child is unable to use contact lenses or in addition to an implant lens or contact lens to help them focus.

Contact Lenses

Usually contact lenses are the preferred option. There are two main types of contact lenses: hard and soft. We use soft contact lenses for babies. These contact lenses are flexible (like thick cellophane) and are about one centimetre wide and about three millimetres thick. We

understand that you may worry about contact lenses but we will show you how to insert, remove and clean your child's contact lenses.

As your child's eye grows....

Usually, as a child grows in the first few years of life the eye gets slightly bigger and the lens inside changes its shape and focusing power to match. If there is no natural lens in the eye then we need to change the power of the glasses and contact lenses as your child's eye grows. So it is very common to have to change the strength of the contact lenses and glasses a lot in the first three years of life.

Inserting and removing contact lenses

We will show you how to insert and remove your baby's contact lenses at the Contact Lens Clinic. It can take a bit of practice, but we will make sure that you are confident before you have to do this at home. It is perfectly normal for your baby to cry during this procedure.

Learning how to insert and remove your baby's contact lenses takes time. Don't worry if you are unable to insert or remove them straight away. If your baby becomes very upset, take a break and return to the lenses a bit later.

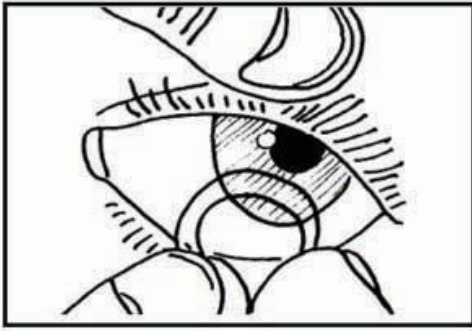
You should remove the contact lenses at night, clean them and place them in the contact lens solution overnight. (There is a risk of infection to your baby's eyes if your baby sleeps with the contact lens at night without removing and cleaning them). You should then insert the contact lenses the following morning. You do not have to remove the contact lenses if your baby is having a nap during the day.

Inserting the Contact Lenses

1. Wrap your baby in a towel or blanket, to keep their arms out of the way, and lay them flat, e.g. on the floor on a changing mat can make it easier. It may be useful to have someone else there to help hold your baby's head still. Often it is easier to remove and insert the lenses if your baby is asleep.
2. Wash and dry your hands, and make sure that you keep your nails clean, short and smooth.
3. Remove the first contact lens from its container and hold it gently across the middle between your right thumb and index finger (left for left-handed people).
4. Hold the contact lens between the thumb and forefinger of your preferred hand (Fig 1).
5. Place the thumb of your other hand as close as possible to your baby's eyelashes on the upper lid. Pull the upper lid up until you can feel the brow bone underneath your thumb and eyelid. (Fig. 2).
6. Push the top edge of the contact lens underneath the upper lid until it rests on the eye. This can be difficult, as a baby's eyelids are very tight. Once you have pushed the lens under the lid you may need to pull the lower eyelid down at the last moment to get all the contact lens in (Fig. 3 and Fig. 4). The contact lens usually moves into the correct position once it has been inserted.

Fig. 1

Fig. 2

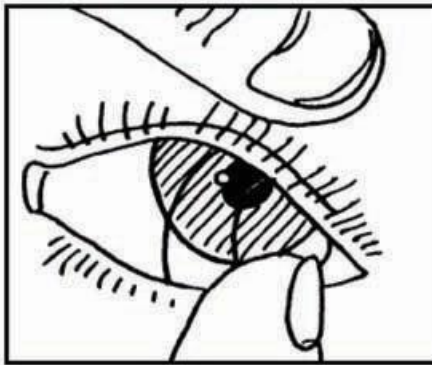


If the contact lens folds over it will be uncomfortable and you will have to remove it and reinsert it. The contact lens may slip underneath the upper lid and disappear from view but it cannot get lost behind the eye and you can massage the upper eyelid to re-centre the contact lens.

Fig. 3



Fig. 4



Removing the Contact Lenses

7. Please repeat steps 1 and 2 as above for inserting.
8. Place one index finger over the top eyelid as close to the eyelashes as possible and pull up the eyelid at the very edge so that you can see the top edge of the contact lens.
9. Place the other index finger at the edge of the lower eyelid and pull it down. Make sure that the eyelids are turned in towards the eye; you should not be able to see the pink inside of the lid at all. (Fig. 5 and Fig. 6)

Fig. 5

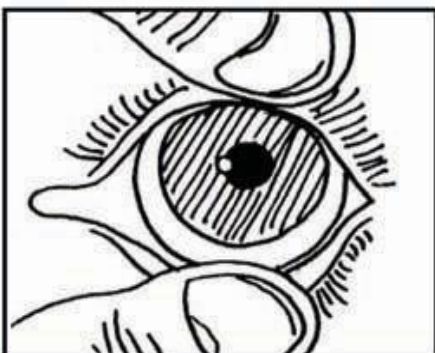


Fig. 6

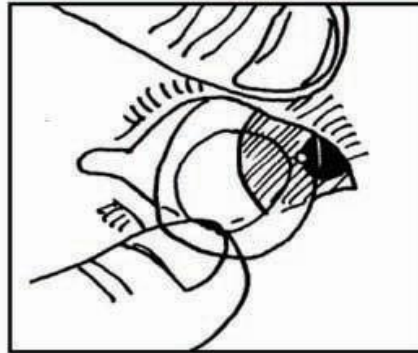


10. Gently press the edge of the lids against the eye (Fig. 7). Then move your index fingers together and the contact lens should pop out (Fig. 8).

Fig. 7



Fig. 8



Make sure you have a container ready, full of the appropriate contact lens solutions in which to put the contact lens.

Cleaning and disinfecting

After removing the contact lenses you need to clean them. We will give you cleaning solutions but if you run out between visits you can buy supplies from a local optometrist (optician), pharmacy or supermarket.

Step 1. Place the lens on the palm of your hand.

Step 2. Put one or two drops of the cleaning solution onto the lens and rub the lens with your forefinger for about 20 seconds.

Step 3. Rinse the cleaning solution off with fresh solution.

Step 4. Fill the case two-thirds full with fresh solution and drop the lens in.

Step 5. Do the same with the other lens. Always make sure that you keep the right and left lenses separate, as they are not necessarily the same.

Step 6. Screw the lids on tightly and leave overnight or for at least four hours.

It is important that you never use tap water as a substitute for contact lens solution.

Problems with Contact Lenses

Loss: If a lens falls out it is important to put a spare contact lens into the eye as soon as possible so that both eyes can see equally well. If you don't have any spares, then phone the clinic. You may need to use glasses in the meantime if you have run out of contact lenses.

Damage: If a lens is damaged or torn then remove it and put it in the bin. If the eye is red following removal of a damaged contact lens then allow the eye to return to its normal appearance before you insert another contact lens. If the eye doesn't appear to improve after a few hours then contact the clinic for advice.

Infection: If the eye is red, sticky or watery, or your baby finds it hard to open, especially in bright light then they might have an infection. If you notice any of these symptoms it is very

important that you **remove the contact lens straight away** and phone the clinic for advice. If your baby has contact lenses in both eyes it is a good idea to remove them both and put your baby's glasses on.

Swimming

We advise you to remove contact lenses before swimming, to avoid infection, and leave the contact lenses out for at least 2 hours after swimming. It is not necessary to remove the lenses when you are bathing your baby.

Patching

Your child will be attending the Ophthalmology and Orthoptic Department as well as the Contact Lens Clinic. The Orthoptist will assess how the vision is developing, and may recommend patching one eye if your baby's vision is weaker in one eye.

Do not use the patch if your baby is not wearing their contact lenses unless they are wearing glasses.

Ophthalmologist Appointments

The Ophthalmologist will carry out regular examinations under anaesthetic to check the health of your baby's eyes. You will need to remove your baby's contact lenses for these appointments.

Contact Lens Clinic

How often you attend appointments at the Contact Lens Clinic depends on several factors:

- how well the lens fits
- how well you are managing to insert and remove them, and
- how quickly the vision is changing. We will arrange the next appointment before you leave the clinic.

If you have any problems between appointments, don't hesitate to contact us.

Remember

In an emergency or if there are any urgent questions you can contact the Contact Lens Department Monday–Friday 9.00 am – 5.00 pm on 0141 211 1043 or the Optometry Department 0141 211 1034. Out of hours you can contact NHS 24 on 111.

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