

**Client:** Advanced Medical Optics (AMO)  
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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**Embargoed until 00:01 EST Wednesday, 19 December 2007**

### **Summer holidays bring an increased risk of eye infections**

Careless contact lens wearers could be putting their sight at risk this summer by not cleaning their contact lenses properly.

Experts report eye infections experienced by contact lens wearers increase by ten times over the summer holiday period, believed to be caused by poor hygiene and common summertime activities such as swimming and surfing.

Eye care professionals believe 90 percent<sup>1</sup> of lens wearers do not clean their contact lenses correctly putting themselves at risk of bacterial eye infections including bacterial corneal and conjunctival infections.

A new set of guidelines endorsed by The Institute for Eye Research at the University of New South Wales and released today, show users how to take better care of their lenses to ensure optimal eye health and reduce the chance of serious infection.

The guidelines were developed by leading eye health experts from Asia at the Asia Pacific Contact Lens Care Summit, held recently in Singapore. The guidelines highlight the safety issues associated with lenses, and offer instructions on the use, maintenance and storage of lenses.

CEO of the Institute for Eye Research at the University of New South Wales and Chair of the Asia Pacific Contact Lens Care Summit, Scientia Professor Brien Holden, said contact lenses are safe if they are used properly but many people are ignoring the product use cleaning instructions.

“Increasingly we see our patients handling their contact lenses in ways that could be contributing to serious eye infections, especially over the holiday period,” said Professor Holden

“When you’re on holiday you forget about proper contact lens cleaning and disinfection. Wearing your contact lenses for an extended period, activities such as swimming and bathrooms all contribute to the risk of eye infection,” he said.

“Just rubbing for 10 seconds on each side of your contact lenses before using a multipurpose solution or hydrogen peroxide system can dramatically reduce the chance of bacteria growing on the lenses and causing problems,” he explained.

Anika Corner a contact lens wearer for 20 years, came close to losing her sight permanently when she developed a serious eye infection from improper lens care.

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<sup>1</sup> “ECP Research Report,” ResearchLink, July 2007.

“It was a hot summer’s day, I was flat out and stressed and the last thing on my mind was looking after my contact lenses. After a stressful day, I went swimming and soon after my eyes became infected. I needed to see an optometrist urgently. It wasn’t until the optometrist said that I could have lost my sight that I realised how important it is to look after my lenses and eye sight,” said Ms. Corner.

“The whole experience was a wakeup call to me. I just needed to care for my contacts properly and it could have been avoided,” she said.

### **About The Institute for Eye Research and International Association of Contact Lens Educators**

The IER is the world’s leading research institute dedicated to research in vision correction, contact lenses and eye care.

IACLE is an educational association dedicated to raising the standard of contact lens education and promoting the safe use of contact lenses worldwide. It aims to:

- Increase the number of qualified contact lens educators
- Improve the quality of contact lens teaching and provide an educational infrastructure
- Thereby increasing the number of skilled contact lens practitioners

The full guidelines are available at the Institute for Eye Research (IER) ([www.ier.org.au](http://www.ier.org.au)) and the International Association of Contact Lens Educators (IACLE) ([www.iacle.org](http://www.iacle.org)) websites.

The Asia Pacific Summit on Contact Lens Care was made possible through an educational grant from Advanced Medical Optics (AMO).

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**For further information, a copy of the full guidelines, images, or to arrange an interview, please contact Edelman:**

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*Issued by Edelman on behalf of Advanced Medical Optics (AMO).*

#### **ATTENTION CONSUMERS!**

##### **KEY STEPS TO ENSURING CONTACT LENS SAFETY**

Follow this new guideline to look after your contact lens to ensure optimum maintenance and hygiene:

1. Contact lens should always be handled with cleaned, washed **dry** hands.
2. Safety is enhanced significantly by **rubbing and rinsing** contact lenses both **prior to and following** storage.
3. When lenses have been stored for **more than 7 days**, regardless of whether peroxide or multipurpose solutions are used, lenses should be effectively **re-disinfected** before the next use.
4. Contact lens case hygiene is extremely important.
5. Contact lens cases should be cleaned and left to air dry after every use.
6. Never **‘top up’**, i.e. add additional solution to the solution already in the lens case.

7. Never use (tap) water to store, clean or rinse your contact lenses as water is a very common source of very infectious and potentially damaging microorganisms that can produce sight-threatening infections.
8. Avoid splashing water directly into your eyes, contact lenses or contact lens cases.
9. Never reuse the solution in a contact lens case.
10. Wash your hands every time you handle your contact lenses or contact lens cases, preferably with appropriate (non-moisturising, non-residue) soap or disinfectant and dry your hands with lint-free tissues or cloths.
11. One of the highest risk occasions is going on vacation – an appropriate ‘travel kit’ should be carried and used regularly.
12. Another high risk occasion for contact lens wearers is exposing lenses to potential contamination from swimming pool or spa water – goggles should be worn while swimming.
13. If you remove your lenses for swimming, they must be properly cleaned (rubbed and rinsed) and disinfected before being reinserted.
14. Storing your contact lenses in the bathroom carries a high risk of airborne contamination.
15. Ask your contact lens practitioner if you have any questions about your lens care.
16. Seek professional advice immediately and remove your contact lenses if your eyes become red or sore.

**For full guidelines please go to [www.ier.org.au](http://www.ier.org.au) or [www.iacle.org](http://www.iacle.org)**