



Halloween contact lenses ‘dangerous’, warns optician

FANCY dress revellers are being urged to seriously consider the health risks of misusing novelty contact lenses this Halloween.

Following a number of reports of people damaging their eyes by using novelty lenses, Specsavers wants consumers to be aware of the dangers of wearing coloured lenses before seeking guidance from an optician.

Making the wrong choice can result in numerous minor eye conditions - such as red eye, infections and scratches - as well as more serious complications that can, in severe cases, lead to sight loss.

Dr Nigel Best, Specsavers clinical spokesperson, says: ‘Halloween contact lenses have become incredibly popular in recent years; however, consumers often are not aware of the risks associated with misusing contact lenses.

‘In particular, if a wearer hasn’t had a proper consultation with an optometrist beforehand, they probably haven’t been taught how to wear or care for their lenses correctly. The results can be nasty and range from mildly irritating complications, to potentially sight-threatening conditions such as fungal infections like microbial keratitis.’

Dr Nigel Best continues: ‘If you do start to notice any discomfort, irritation or pain during or after wearing Hallowe’en contact lenses it is important you visit an optician immediately. Many of our Specsavers stores now offer eye health clinics where you can receive treatment for a range of minor eye conditions without needing to visit your GP or hospital.’

How to avoid a frightening mishap this Halloween

- 1. Seek guidance from your optician before using novelty contact lenses:** Even if you don't have any problems with your vision, it is crucial you have a comprehensive eye test to check the overall health of your eyes. Your optician can fit you with coloured contact lenses that are deemed safe to use and can also show you how to insert and remove them properly without damaging your eye.
- 2. Avoid purchasing cheap products online:** You should be incredibly wary of buying from online sellers. If not fitted and used correctly these lenses could be harmful to your eyes. It's worth investing more money in a pair from a qualified opticians that you know are safe to use.
- 3. Clean and store your lenses properly:** Bacterial and fungal infections can occur when lenses are not cleaned or stored properly. Always avoid rinsing contact lenses with water and ensure you store in your lenses in a closed container with a proper solution, as opposed to a saline solution.
- 4. Do not fall asleep in your lenses:** No matter how tired you are, falling asleep in your contact lenses is not a good idea. Sleeping in contact lenses which have not been specifically prescribed for overnight wear significantly increases the risk of nasty eye infections.
- 5. Never share contact lenses with other people:** It might sound obvious, but sharing contact lenses with other people is a big no-no, even if they haven't be worn. Using lenses that are not yours can spread bacteria, infections and dirt particles. The same goes for your Halloween make up - mascara, eyeliner and eye shadow shouldn't be shared.

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Notes to Editors

- Specsavers is a partnership of almost 2,000 locally-run businesses throughout the world -all committed to delivering high quality, affordable optical and hearing care in the communities they serve.
- Each store is part-owned and managed by its own joint venture partners who are supported by key specialists in support offices
- More than 36 million customers are registered with Specsavers and the partnership had a turnover of more than £2.2bn in 2016/17
- More than one in three people who wear glasses in the UK buy them from Specsavers
- Specsavers is a champion of the National Health Service – of its 22.2m customers in the UK, 55% are from the NHS and the company is the largest provider of free NHS digital hearing aids
- Specsavers supports several UK charities and is in partnership with RNIB for a public awareness campaign to transform the nation's eye health.
- Specsavers runs a home-visiting service in the UK and Ireland called Specsavers Healthcall for those who cannot get to their local store unaccompanied.