

## Contact Lens Wear and coronavirus (COVID-19) guidance

**In response COVID-19, public health organisations and government health officials are putting in place plans to ensure that people receive the right advice, care and support and that you have the best information.**

### **UK Primary Health Care COVID-19 guidance**

All Eye Care Professionals (ECP) within the UK will be prepared and will follow guidance from their local authority [new guidance from NHS England](#) and for those in Scotland, Health Protection Scotland has issued [updated advice for opticians and optometrists](#). There are also updates for ECP's practising or living in [Wales](#) and [Northern Ireland](#), as well as other government and professional bodies. It is important that all those people who seek the care and advice of an Eye Care Professional should also be assured that procedures are being rolled out to help minimise the spread of the virus.

NHS England and NHS Improvement has published a new coronavirus standard operating procedure for providers of eye care outside of hospitals in England. The document covers what preparations each optical practice should put in place as well as detailing the information practices should give to the public about the virus, including practice posters. It highlights the generic principles for primary care settings and providers in dealing with a patient with coronavirus, including identifying potential cases as soon as possible before clinical care has started.

### **Healthy contact lens wear and care**

There is no evidence to date that contact lens wear should be avoided by healthy individuals, or that contact lens wearers are more at risk for a coronavirus infection compared to those wearing spectacles.

There is currently no evidence to suggest any correlation between the usage of contact lenses and the spread of Covid-19 or a coronavirus infection related to contact lens use.

To help maintain healthy contact lens wear, all contact lenses wearers should follow correct lens wear and care instructions as prescribed by their Eye Care Professional. These include following good hygiene practices. When you are unwell, for example cold or flu like symptoms, you may not feel like wearing lenses and this is good practice. Please seek guidance from your Eye Care Professional if you have any queries.

[BCLA Wearing and Caring guides](#) are available to download.

- **Always wash and dry your hands thoroughly before handling contact lenses and lens cases.**
- **Always wash and dry your hands thoroughly before applying a contact lens, even if the lens is new and directly from the packaging.**
- **Always wash and dry your hands before removing your contact lenses.**

Public health messages from across the world are urging people to wash their hands to help prevent the spread of the virus. The US-based Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has issued [coronavirus guidance](#) stating that eyes should not be touched with *unwashed* hands. This is a timely reminder, but as either an Eye Care Professional or contact lens wearer, you will be already aware of the importance of basic hand hygiene with contact lenses.