

Bandage Contact Lenses

Information for patients



Department of Optometry,
Oxford Eye Hospital

What is a bandage contact lens?

A bandage contact lens is designed to protect an injured or diseased cornea from the mechanical rubbing of the blinking eyelids, therefore allowing it to heal. The Bandage lens often makes the eye feel more comfortable. It is usually a soft lens, but not always. The lens has no focusing power. It is not intended to improve your vision.

Will I feel the lens?

You may 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?

You will not normally 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. The optometrist will then 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 you might need to wear your bandage contact lens on a longer term basis. If this is the case, we may instruct you on how to handle the lens yourself.

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 focusing 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 this, we may recommend putting in particular artificial tear drops or artificial tear gel to both eyes before going to bed and then again when you wake up.

IMPORTANT:

If you notice that your vision is more hazy in the morning than it was the night before and stays hazy, contact us immediately.

2. Occasionally a small number of people 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.

IMPORTANT:

If your eye becomes:

- **more red**
- **more painful (rather than improving)**
- **sticky**
- **watery or has discharge**
- **unable to see as clearly.**

CONTACT US IMMEDIATELY

Please see page 7 for contact details.

Can I use eye drops with my bandage contact lens?

If your ophthalmologist or doctor has prescribed eye drops 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 using. Preservatives can build up in the lens over time and start to irritate your eye.

If you use artificial tear drops or gel to improve eye comfort, you must also make sure that these drops are preservative-free. Speak to your doctor about this.

Can I wear eye makeup with my contact lenses?

Yes you can, but please follow the advice below:

- ALWAYS wash your hands thoroughly before touching your 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, creams can irritate your eyes more if they do get in. Choose water-based rather than oil-based creams.
- If you prefer powder, keep your eye 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 your hands and then use your eye makeup remover (preferably non-oily).
- Replace your eye make up frequently – at least every three months. Bacteria can get into the product and build up overtime, increasing the risk of infection if it gets into your eye.
- Never share eye makeup.

Coming to your appointments

Always keep your contact lens aftercare appointments. If the time is inconvenient please contact Optometry Department to re-arrange the appointment.

If your eye is red, sticky or uncomfortable, **REMOVE THE LENS** and contact the:

Optometry Department

Monday to Friday, 8:30am to 1:00pm

Telephone **01865 234 567** for the Eye Hospital, then choose the option for 'Optometry Department' or email: **optometry.secretary@ouh.nhs.uk**

In an emergency, if your condition is urgent (symptoms for less than five days), call our specialist telephone triage number.

Telephone: **01865 234 567** the option for "Eye Emergency"

Monday to Friday 8.30am to 4.30pm

Saturday and Sunday 8.30am to 3.30pm

(including Bank Holidays)

You will be able to speak to an ophthalmic health professional who will advise you.

If you need advice **out of hours**, please phone **NHS 111** or your out of hours GP practice.

Further information

If you would like an interpreter, please speak to the department where you are being seen.

Please also tell them if you would like this information in another format, such as:

- Easy Read
- large print
- braille
- audio
- electronic
- another language.

We have tried to make the information in this leaflet meet your needs. If it does not meet your individual needs or situation, please speak to your healthcare team. They are happy to help.

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Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

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