

# Corrective Lenses Offer Various Options

The American Optometric Association says more than 30 million Americans wear contact lenses, the overwhelming majority (80 percent) of them soft contact lens wearers.

Increased length of wearing time, improved biocompatible materials, and lenses that reshape the cornea overnight to correct vision are but a few of the improvements seen in the past decade.

There are several kinds of contact lenses on the market, each with its own set of advantages and disadvantages, according to the AOA. Generally speaking, they are able to provide better sight than eyeglasses, but they do involve more follow up with an eye care professional and contact lens hygiene is imperative to prevent infection. According to a report on the 2009 U.S. contact lens market, silicone hydrogel lenses are the most commonly prescribed lens (54 percent). Soft toric

lenses to correct astigmatism account for 22 percent of the market; of those 30 percent are silicone hydrogel toric lenses.

Some of the newest advances in contact lens technology is the introduction of silicone hydrogel lenses for people who need bifocals, called multifocals, designed to give the wearer good vision during all activities (reading the paper, working on a computer, driving, etc.).

Another recent advancement is Corneal Refractive Therapy (CRT), a non-surgical alternative to LASIK for people of all ages who are nearsighted. CRT users wear a therapeutic contact lens that reshapes the front surface of the wearer's eye during sleep to correct their vision rather than wearing contact lenses during the day. For contact lens wearers

who experience discomfort from their daytime contact lenses or who are active in after-school activities, CRT lenses "provide visual freedom from traditional daytime contact lens wear," said Joe Sicari, president and chief executive officer, Paragon Vision Sciences. Some early research indicates these kinds of corrective lenses might help slow the progression of myopia (nearsightedness) in children, although that has not yet been proven. One downside to the technology is if the patient stops wearing CRT overnight, the corrective vision that was achieved will eventually revert back to the user's original prescription.

Standard vision correction will likely continue to be glasses, traditional contact lenses, CRT-type lenses, and a variety of surgical choices, Mr. Sicari said.

Contact lenses "may emerge that can be worn by and provide benefit to people with or without 20/20 vision, but who are seeking vision enhancement for their sport, profession, or computer game performance," Mr. Sicari said.

He also believes there will be "better products, particularly contact lenses, offering better options for people requiring bifocals to see well."



Are contacts or glasses interfering with your child's game? Ask your doctor about contacts kids wear ONLY while sleeping.

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No daytime contacts  
No surgery.

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