



THE OFFICIAL NEWSMAGAZINE OF THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS

# AAP News

Volume 31 • Number 9  
September 2010  
www.aapnews.org

## AAP News Parent Plus

INFORMATION FROM YOUR PEDIATRICIAN

### Is your child ready to wear contact lenses?

If your child starts complaining that he can't see the blackboard or you notice he is squinting while reading, it might be time for a pair of glasses. However, if your child plays sports or is fearful of being called "four eyes," he might try to persuade you to let him get contact lenses instead.



How do you know if contacts are right for your child?

There is no minimum age to wear contact lenses, according to pediatric eye specialists. Children in elementary school could be great candidates for contacts, while some high school students aren't responsible enough for the daily care that contacts require. The key is to think about how well your child remembers to do chores or homework, or if he is consistent about taking care of a pet. If your child needs constant reminders about daily tasks, he's probably not ready for contact lenses.

If your child is prescribed contact lenses, he will be responsible for:

- washing his hands before touching his eyes or lenses;
- taking the contacts out every night before bed;
- disinfecting and storing the contacts overnight if they aren't daily disposable or extended wear lenses; and
- taking the lenses out without help at school if necessary, such as if dirt gets in the eye.

Daily disposable soft contact lenses, which are thrown away at the end of every day, are a great option for younger wearers because they don't need to be disinfected and stored every night. Extended wear lenses can be worn overnight, but pediatric ophthalmologists still recommend that these lenses be removed at night to reduce the risk of infection. An ophthalmologist or optometrist can help you decide which type of lens is best for your child.

Your child should know to remove the lenses immediately if his eyes hurt or become blurry or bloodshot. These can be signs of an eye infection. If the symptoms persist, your child should be seen as soon as possible by the person who prescribed the lenses. Meanwhile, he will need to switch back to glasses until his doctor says it's OK to wear the contact lenses again. This is why it's important to have a pair of glasses with an up-to-date prescription.

If your child gets multiple eye infections or constantly forgets to take his lenses out at night, it might be a good idea to go back to wearing glasses until he is older.

— Rose Pastore

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