

Buying Contact Lenses Without a Prescription is Dangerous!

You may want to look like your favorite movie star or singer or have the perfect look for Halloween, but choosing to change the look of your eyes with contact lenses could cause a lot of damage to your eyesight. Decorative contact lenses are sometimes called:

- fashion contact lenses,
- Halloween contact lenses,
- color contact lenses,
- cosmetic contact lenses,
- theatre contact lenses and others.

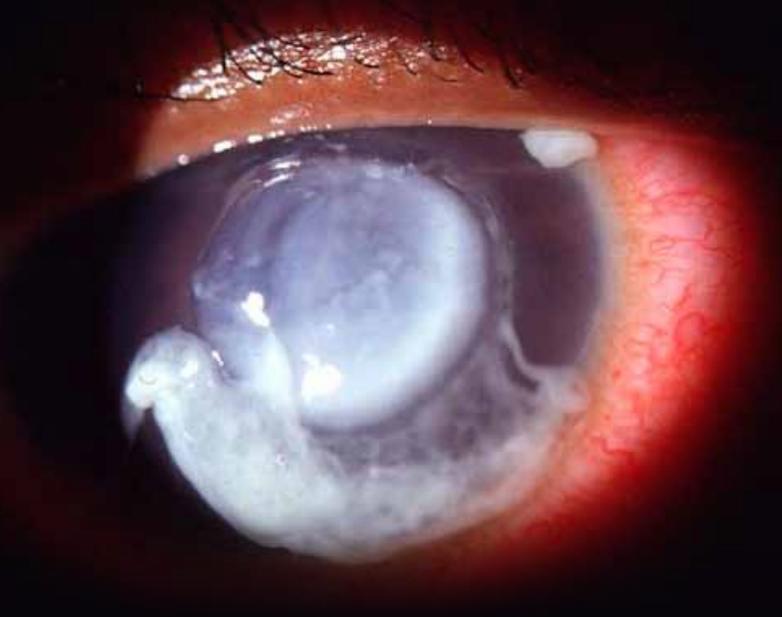
Decorative contact lenses just change the look of your eyes. They do not correct your vision. They can temporarily change your brown eyes to blue or make your eyes look like cat eyes or vampire eyes for Halloween.

Just like regular contact lenses you should never buy contact lenses from a street vendor, a beauty supply store, flea market, novelty store or Halloween store and you should always have a prescription.

Know the Risks

Wearing decorative contact lenses can be risky, just like the contact lenses that correct your vision. Wearing any kind of contact lenses, including decorative ones, can cause serious damage to your eyes if the lenses are not used correctly. These risks include:

- Allergic reactions
- Corneal abrasion – a cut or scratch on the cornea (the top layer of your eyeball)
- Infection
- Decreased vision
- Blindness



Above: Pseudomonas eye infection.

Image courtesy of Thomas Steinemann, MD and MetroHealth Medical Center

If you have any of these signs, you need to see a licensed eye doctor (optometrist or ophthalmologist) right away! An eye infection could become serious and cause you to become blind if it is not treated.

Buying Decorative Contact Lenses

You can buy contact lenses, including decorative contact lenses, from an eye care doctor, on the Internet or from a mail-order company. It's very important that you only buy contact lenses from a company that sells FDA-cleared or approved contact lenses and requires you to provide a prescription.

Anyone selling you contact lenses must get your prescription and verify it with your doctor. They should request not only the prescription, but the name of your doctor and their phone number. If they don't ask for this information they are breaking federal law and could be selling you illegal contact lenses.

Right now there are a lot of products that you can buy without a prescription but they may not be safe or legal. Never buy contact lenses from a street vendor, a beauty supply store, flea market, novelty store or Halloween store.

- Do get an eye exam!
- Do get a prescription!
- Do follow the contact lens care instructions!
- Do seek medical attention right away and remove your contact lenses if your eyes are red, have ongoing pain or discharge!
- Don't share your contact lenses with anyone else!
- Don't buy any contact lenses without a prescription!