

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Prevent Blindness Declares October as Contact Lens Safety Awareness Month to Help Educate Millions of Users on the Best Ways to Keep Eyes Healthy**

***-Non-profit Group Urges Consumers to Seek Expert Advice, Obtain a Prescription for all Contact Lenses-***

**CHICAGO (Sept. 25, 2019)** – An estimated 45 million people in the United States wear contact lenses, according to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#). [Prevent Blindness](#), the nation's oldest volunteer non-profit eye health organization, has declared October as Contact Lens Safety Awareness Month to educate the public on the best ways to care for their eyes through safe use and care of contact lenses.

The CDC also states that serious eye infections that can lead to blindness affect up to one out of every 500 contact lens users per year. Yet, between 40- 90 percent of contact lens wearers do not properly follow the care instructions for their contact lenses.

Many consumers may not be aware that the [U.S. Food and Drug Administration \(FDA\)](#) regulates contact lenses and certain contact lens care products as medical devices. Additionally, the FDA states that contact lenses are not over-the-counter (OTC) devices, and companies that sell them as such are misbranding the device and violating Federal Trade Commission (FTC) regulations by selling contact lenses without having a valid prescription.

According to a recent consumer survey from the [American Academy of Optometry](#), 11 percent of consumers have worn decorative, non-corrective contact lenses. Of those, 53 percent purchased them illegally without a prescription.

“Because contact lenses are medical devices, the first step for anyone interested in purchasing contact lenses should be making an appointment with an eyecare professional,” said Jeff Todd, president and CEO of Prevent Blindness. “If it’s determined that contact lenses are right for the patient, a prescription is required for purchase for all types of contact lenses, even the decorative ones.”

Any time a foreign object or material is placed in the eye, there is an increased risk of complications. All contact lens wearers should always follow an eye doctor's instructions about care and cleaning of the lenses.

Prevent Blindness strongly recommends contact lens wearers contact an eye doctor if they experience the following:

- Unexplained eye discomfort or pain
- Redness of the eye
- Watering eyes
- Vision change

For more information on contact lens safety, please call (800) 331-2020 or visit <http://www.preventblindness.org/wearing-contact-lenses>.

### **About Prevent Blindness**

Founded in 1908, Prevent Blindness is the nation's leading volunteer eye health and safety organization dedicated to fighting blindness and saving sight. Focused on promoting a continuum of vision care, Prevent Blindness touches the lives of millions of people each year through public and professional education, advocacy, certified vision screening and training, community and patient service programs and research. These services are made possible through the generous support of the American public. Together with a network of affiliates, Prevent Blindness is committed to eliminating preventable blindness in America. For more information, or to make a contribution to the sight-saving fund, call 1-800-331-2020. Or, visit us on the Web at [preventblindness.org](http://preventblindness.org) or [facebook.com/preventblindness](https://facebook.com/preventblindness).

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