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Research shows that the two week modality lens types are the ones that are most often abused or worn longer than two weeks. It would be best to circle a day on your calendar every two weeks in red marker to try to help remember when two weeks is up.

What happens to lenses when one wears a given pair too long? Lipids and proteins build up on the surface of the lens which can irritate the eye and reduce comfort or wearing time. These substances are present in human tears.

This problem is worse in those who don't routinely rub-clean their lenses in their palm before placing them in the case. Some solution chemicals (preservatives) can build up in the material to a concentration that can also irritate the eye, making it red and causing a burning sensation.

If you currently wear soft lenses and ever want to try the daily disposable lenses, let me know as we do have sample boxes we can give you to try. They even make daily disposables in torics for astigmatism also.

EyeMed Vision Care

Sather Eye Clinic and Optical has been approved as an approved provider for those individuals who have purchased their vision insurance through EyeMed. We now file the claims electronically via their website which means we no longer need to fill out those "out of network" forms anymore.

It was quite a process getting approved and did take about 3 months. Changes over the last year have enabled us to enroll. Their website address is eyemedvisioncare.com.

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TAKE A CLOSER LOOK

**YOUR EYE CARE NEWSLETTER
WINTER 2008**



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Laser Refractive Surgery Update

I went to a two hour lecture on this topic a few weeks ago. One of the first things the clinic director said was that most eye care practitioners fail to discuss or offer refractive surgery as an option for vision correction. He knows this because many patients call the laser surgery clinic directly for information because their eye care practitioner never brought the subject up. I guess I probably fall into that category a good portion of the time. What happens is that I compare the parameters of what constitutes a good laser surgery candidate with the age and visual condition of the person in the exam chair in my mind. If I rule the person out as a candidate I then don't discuss it as an option.

Some laser surgery websites advise that a candidate's minimum age be 18 years of age. I believe 25 years of age is a better minimum age. Since we are talking about elective eye surgery I think being conservative is better and most of the colleagues whose opinion I value agree with me. In the 12 years I have been following up on laser surgery cases I have seen several individuals who had the procedure done prior to age 25 whose prescriptions continued to increase after surgery, necessitating a re-treatment. A couple of these individuals had gone back to grad school and consequently more heavy reading. There are also probably individuals whose bodies do not totally mature as early as others.

I have also found that results are generally better and more accurate on individuals prior to age 45. After age 45 changes in the crystalline lens inside the eye can alter a person's prescription and begin to negate the good results that were initially obtained after even the best laser surgery procedure. This is not to say that those over age 45 would not enjoy greatly decreased dependence on glasses or contact lenses for distance vision. They would of course, need to still wear glasses for reading.

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The real update I want to touch on here is the latest recommendations for how long an individual should be out of their contact lenses before having their pre-operative examination. Contact lenses can and do affect both the shape of a person's cornea (the part of the eye that the laser re-shapes) and thusly affect a person's prescription. Here it is:

Daily Wear Soft Contact Lenses -4.00 power or less:	2 wks minimum/4 weeks ideal
Daily Wear Soft Contact Lenses -4.25 power or more:	4 wks minimum/8 weeks ideal
Toric Soft Contact Lenses -4.00 power or less:	4 wks minimum/8 weeks ideal
Toric Soft Contact Lenses -4.25 power or more:	8 wks minimum/16 weeks ideal
Extended Wear Soft Lenses -4.00 power or less:	4 wks minimum/8 weeks ideal
Extended Wear Soft Lenses -4.25 power or more:	8 wks minimum/16 weeks ideal
Gas Permeable Lenses:	One month plus one month for every decade of wear.

If patients go directly to a laser center for a consultation on whether they are a candidate, they should be out of their contact lenses for two weeks prior to the consult. On a national basis, former gas permeable wearers still have the highest enhancement or re-treatment rates. There are other contra-indications for laser refractive surgery which I will go over in a future newsletter.

Itchy Allergy Eye News

There is good news for those of you that suffer from red, itchy eyes. Seasonal allergies due to pollen are most common in the warmer months but many of you, like myself, are allergic to our pets all year. You give your pet a scratch, touch the corner of your eye and boom; you have a red itchy eye. The good news is that Zaditor, previously only available by prescription, is now offered as an over-the-counter eyedrop.



I have used it and find it as good as Patanol or Optivar. I went by the drug counter in Van's and found it in an orange box for \$14.99! That is much cheaper than the \$60 to \$75 price of the prescription drops. It wipes out the itching and reduces the swelling from the allergy attack. For really severe cases a stronger steroid drop would have to be prescribed.

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What's With Contact Lens Replacement Schedules?

As many of you know, the Federal Drug Administration is the government entity that approves drugs and medical devices for sale to the public. Contact lenses are classified as medical devices and companies desiring to bring a product to market face quite a rigorous qualification process to follow in order to do so. One of the components of the approval process is the "replacement schedule" or how long a given pair of lenses may be safely worn with current care regimens (solutions, cleaners, etc). So, as part of the FDA approval, there is a replacement schedule for each type of lens.

The original "hard" contact lenses seemed to last forever. They were made out of a polymethyl methacrylate material. They almost never warped, were very resistant to deposits or contamination, kind of a challenge to get used to and sure did not pass any oxygen to the cornea! When soft contact lenses came into use in the late 70's, one had to use pretty heroic cleaning methods to keep them for even one year. Many of you remember the care regimen of single purpose daily cleaners, saline rinse, enzyme pills along with either a heat unit or cold disinfection system. Over the course of a year, patients spent more money on the stuff to care for their lenses than they did on the lenses!



As manufacturing costs came down, soft contact lenses became less expensive to produce and some wise scientist figured out that it would be way healthier for the eye to just replace the lenses more frequently than to depend on mastering the very complicated care systems. This has worked very well and the complication rate (red eyes, burning, discharge, infections, etc) has come way down. When I see these complications these days, it is mostly due to wearing a given pair of lenses too long or sleeping in contact lenses which are not approved for such use. Patients can have sensitivities to certain chemicals in some of the modern all-in-one solutions, however, through no fault of their own. That problem is generally solved by going to a hypoallergenic hydrogen peroxide based care system such as Clear Care (used to be called AOSept) combined with canned saline for rinsing prior to insertion.

So we have replacement schedules that are daily, weekly, every two weeks, monthly and bimonthly, in general. There are still some specialty lenses that are approved for a year or longer. The latter would generally be custom built lenses, gas permeables or certain hybrid lenses. Interestingly, the daily disposable lens modality is number one in Europe.

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