

Reasons Why Only Regulated Professionals Should Provide Cosmetic Contact Lenses

Opticians should refer to a contact lens registrant for evaluation, remediation or referral, persons in difficulty with any contact lens not provided by a regulated professional.

Contact lens registrants should take comprehensive notes on the problem and submit case reports to the College of Opticians of British Columbia.

Oxygen Permeability

- Cosmetic Lenses are generally made of HEMA an original contact lens material that has been superseded by lens materials with greater oxygen permeability
- Cosmetic Lenses are made by laminating a pattern between clear materials. This makes the lens thicker than normal
- Combining an outdated, thick material with a large diameter severely reduces the ability of oxygen to reach the cornea through the tear fluid - this can lead to swelling of the cornea

Size

- Cosmetic Lenses are generally made with a 14.50mm or 23.00mm diameter (covering the sclera)
- These diameters are larger than normal particularly the 23.00mm diameter variety
- A larger diameter means more of the cornea is covered resulting in reduced oxygen flow
- Lack of Oxygen causes edema (water retention) which leads to swelling of the cornea tissue

Corneal Insult

- The combination of swelling and a lack of fluid between the cosmetic lens and the cornea can lead to abrasion and possibly ulceration
- The lack of tears can also cause the lenses to adhere to the corneal tissue making removal difficult
- Removing a poorly hydrated lens that has adhered to the tissue can also cause abrasion
- Abraded and ulcerated tissue is susceptible to infection
- Infection can quickly lead to blindness often within 24 hours