

CLEANING RIGID GAS PERMEABLE CONTACT LENSES

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❖ Why should you clean rigid gas permeable contact lenses?

Clean, disinfected contact lenses are the best way to guarantee that the lenses will give good vision, be comfortable and can be worn all day. Clean lenses are also safer for your eyes and last longer. Unfortunately we all get little lazy and cut corners and it's easy to skip a part of the contact lens cleaning routine when we're tired or it's late. We often promise that we will do it tomorrow anyway. Experienced contact lens practitioners know that patients who have the least amount of infections and problems with their lenses are the ones who religiously adhere to the recommended cleaning routine. It just becomes part of their life, like brushing their teeth. The cleaning routine removes mucus, protein, oils, cosmetics, bacteria and other micro-organisms from the surface of the lens.

❖ Recommended cleaning routine after wearing rigid gas permeable contact lenses.

1. Always wash your hands before handling the lenses.
2. Clean the lenses at night - not in the morning, otherwise the slimy layer left on the lens from the tear film will be harder to completely clean off in the morning.
3. Use a specific daily cleaner, such as Boston Daily Cleaner or Lobob Extra Strength Cleaner for 30 seconds, gently rubbing in a circular pattern in the palm. Thirty seconds is a long time! Mississippi one, Mississippi two, Mississippi three etc..... The daily cleaner has a red tip – do not get it into your eye. All-in-one solutions, i.e. one solution for the whole care routine, are inadequate to fully clean the lens surface. The daily cleaner does the best job of removing debris off the lens.
4. Rinse off the daily cleaner with preserved saline solution, rinsing until the lens is squeaky clean.
5. Place a few drops of conditioning solution in the case and gently place the lens in the case and liberally cover the lens with fresh conditioning solution, such as Boston Simplus, Boston Advance Conditioning solution or Menicon MeniCare Plus and soak overnight. The conditioning solution disinfects the lens and prevents micro-organisms from contaminating the lens.
6. The lens can be inserted directly into the eye in the morning, still with the conditioning solution covering the lens. Some patients find the conditioning solutions too thick and rinse the lens with preserved saline before insertion. *Note: not applicable to miniscleral RGP lenses. Please see separate information sheet.
7. After you rinse the lens case and lids with preserved saline and dry them thoroughly with a tissue. Clean the inside of the case thoroughly with a few drops of daily cleaner once a week (use a new toothbrush reserved for this purpose), then rinse thoroughly with saline and dry with a tissue.
8. Enzyme cleaners are extra treatments that remove residual deposits of protein, mucus and oils that the daily cleaning routines have been unable to remove.

9. Some are daily drops - SupraClens; others are drops used weekly – Boston Enzymatic cleaner and Progent (a combination of 2 solutions) is usually used monthly. How often the enzyme treatments need to be used depends on how quickly the residual deposits accumulate on the lens surface. Some patients need to use Progent weekly, others every two months; the practitioner will advise on the recommended frequency and which is the best product.
10. The storage case should be replaced at least every three months.
11. In eye wetting drops can substantially increase comfort when adapting to rigid gas permeable lenses or even on a regular basis for long term wearers to rewet the lens surface and to flush debris from under the lens. E.g. Boston Rewetting drops, Refresh Contacts.
12. If you use a suction cup to insert or remove your lenses remember to clean the suction cup thoroughly after each use with a drop of daily cleaner and then rinse with saline. Like cases, the suction cups should be replaced at least every three months.
13. Suction cups can be very useful in removing lenses that have become dislodged into the white part of the eye. The lenses can settle down into the conjunctiva and be almost impossible to remove with the usual blinking method.

❖ **WHAT NOT TO DO – When wearing rigid gas permeable contact lenses.**

1. Don't sleep in your lenses.
2. Don't reuse the same conditioning solution to store the lenses.
3. Don't top up the conditioning solution; replace it completely with new solution.
4. Don't handle the lenses over the sink without putting a plug in.
5. Don't put the lenses in your mouth to rewet them. The micro-organisms in the saliva are dangerous when placed in the eye.
6. Don't rinse the lenses in hot water; it will distort the rigid gas permeable material.
7. Don't change to a different brand or type of cleaning solution unless you check with your practitioner; the young assistant in the pharmacy may not be the best authority on cleaning routines for rigid gas permeable lenses. Different solutions may be incompatible with your lenses.
8. If you drop a lens don't drag it along the surface, it may chip the lens. Wet your finger with a drop of conditioning or rewetting solution and gently touch the lens to lift it up.
9. If the lens becomes suctioned down onto the bottom of the case, concave down, don't try to prise it off, otherwise you will chip the lens. Turn the cold tap with a moderate flow and allow the force of the water to free the lens. Remember to put the plug in! Clean your lens and case thoroughly after exposing them to tap water.
10. Don't get the lenses mixed up. Different coloured lenses can help, R – green, L – blue; try and get into a routine of removing/cleaning or inserting the same lens first every time.