



## Contact Lenses and Tap Water Don't Mix

Contact lenses are extremely safe and effective at correcting focusing problems and in some cases improving the health of the eye, provided they are cared for correctly. A study published by an Australian group last year listed several risk factors that increase the risk of an eye infection in contact lens wearers. The way the lenses were looked after was high on the list, and in particular the use of tap water to clean, rinse or store the contact lenses. While we think of tap water as clean and safe it still contains microscopic bugs capable of causing eye infections. Even swimming and showering can lead to exposure to these bugs. Tragically, if these painful eye infections are not treated properly they can lead to a permanent loss of vision. After a spate of eye infections earlier this year, our colleagues in Britain produced stickers to be placed on contact lens packaging with a “no tap water” warning.



The safest way to protect against infections is to:

- Clean and dry your hands before handling lenses
- Stick with the cleaning solution that was recommended by your optometrist
- Replace your lenses as directed
- Replace your contact lens case at least every 3 months (monthly is better)
- Clean your lens case after each use with sterile solution and allow to air dry
- **Never, never use tap water to clean your contact lenses or the case.**