

Transcript Details

This is a transcript of an educational program. Details about the program and additional media formats for the program are accessible by visiting: <https://reachmd.com/programs/eye-on-ocular-health/debunking-myopia-myths-kids-are-safer-contact-lens-wearers-than-you-may-think/36283/>

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Debunking Myopia Myths: Kids Are Safer Contact Lens Wearers Than You May Think

Announcer:

You're listening to *Eye on Ocular Health* on ReachMD. On this episode, we'll discuss the safety of contact lenses for pediatric patients with myopia with Dr. Jeffrey Walline. He's the Associate Dean for Research at The Ohio State University College of Optometry. Here's Dr. Walline now.

Dr. Walline:

I think that parents think their children can't take care of contact lenses, which might lead to negative side effects, like they could get an eye infection or something, but that's honestly just not true. And when we look at the data, the people at highest risk of having contact lens complications are actually college-age children, and these young myopes are actually at lower risk. And we're all willing to have college-age kids wear contact lenses, so why not these young kids who aren't at as much of risk as the older kids? Some of the other things that we hear related to children and the risks of contact lenses are that they might not have as much benefit as college-age kids or teenagers, but we have evidence to show that they benefit as much. They might be at higher risk because they're not as good at taking care of their contact lenses, but again, we have evidence to show that they're not at any higher risk. We've taken a look at the long-term effects of wearing contact lenses—so after 10 years of wear—we've shown that if you are fit with contact lenses between the ages of 7 and 12 versus 13 to 17, the health of your eye is exactly the same after 10 years, so the long-term consequences are similar. So really, there are no additional risks for children, and they might even have slightly fewer additional risks because they just don't have as risky of a lifestyle. They tend to sleep in their contact lenses less than college-age students. They don't go out drinking and wear their contact lenses all night, so they're just at a lower risk profile, and therefore, they generally have fewer problems.

I think the best way to address these safety concerns is by fitting kids with contact lenses that are daily disposable, that don't require any care, and just making sure that if they have a red eye, a painful eye, or an eye that can't see, that they take out the contact lenses immediately; if it doesn't go away, they need to contact the doctor right away because those are the signs of potentially sight-threatening complications, and so we've got to get them taken care of appropriately. And then make sure that the kids are being compliant with taking the contact lenses out every night and not ever wearing them to bed and trying to minimize napping and risky behaviors with contact lenses. But kids are actually very good at all those things, so there's not much monitoring that's necessary by the parents.

Announcer:

That was Dr. Jeffrey Walline talking about the safety of contacts for pediatric patients with myopia. To access this and other episodes in our series, visit *Eye on Ocular Health* on ReachMD.com, where you can Be Part of the Knowledge. Thanks for listening!