



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**USING COSMETICS AND CONTACT LENSES CORRECTLY
CAN HELP KEEP EYES HEALTHY AND BEAUTIFUL**
*Prevent Blindness Ohio Offers Safety Tips to
Promote Proper Use of Eye Makeup and Contact Lens Care*

COLUMBUS, OH – The cosmetics and personal care products industry annually generates more than \$250 billion globally. Although the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) monitors many of these products for safety, consumers need to make sure they are using products correctly to help protect themselves.

Improper use of eye cosmetics can lead to eye infections, irritations and corneal injuries. Prevent Blindness Ohio has designated April as Women's Eye Health and Safety Awareness Month using this opportunity to offer free tips to the public on the safe use of eye cosmetics. Contact lens wearers should take extra precautions as cosmetics are a common source of eye problems for contact lens users.

"We want to get everyone in the habit of applying cosmetics in a safe way to avoid painful eye injuries," said Sherill Williams, President and CEO of Prevent Blindness Ohio. "It's never too early to start caring for our eyes, and we strongly encourage women to make eye health a priority for themselves and their families today."

Prevent Blindness Ohio advises cosmetic users of all ages to:

- Never use makeup testers in stores or share eye makeup with others.
- Dispose of eye cosmetics three months after they are purchased, according to the American Academy of Ophthalmology (AAO).
- Always apply makeup outside the lash line to avoid contact with the eye.
- Never store cosmetics in extreme heat or cold conditions (such as a car), as this can break down preservatives, allowing bacteria to grow.
- Never apply eye cosmetics if eyes are already red, swollen, or if you have recently undergone eye surgery until an eye doctor has given permission.
- Do not dye eyelashes or eyebrows. No color additives have been approved by the FDA for permanent dyeing or tinting of eyelashes or eyebrows.

Whether contact lenses are used for vision correction or simply to change the appearance of eye color, they should never be considered merely cosmetic. In fact, in 2005, the FDA ruled that all contact lenses are considered medical devices and therefore can only be obtained with a prescription and used under the direction of an eye care professional.

Contact lens users should:

- Visit a licensed eye care professional for regular, comprehensive eye exams to be fitted for contact lenses.
- Always insert contact lenses before applying makeup and remove them before taking makeup off.
- Never share or trade contact lenses with others.
- Before handling contact lenses, wash hands with soap and water, then rinse and dry them with a lint-free towel.
- Minimize contact with water, including removing lenses before going swimming or in a hot tub.
- Always clean contact lenses with fresh solution – not water. Leave the empty case open to air dry.
- Do not use cracked or damaged lens cases. Lens cases can be a source of contamination and infection.
- Keep the contact lens case clean and replace it regularly, at least every three months.

Prevent Blindness America offers these tips to help lower the incidence of eye problems in women:

Eat Healthy and Stay Fit- The *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* found that the risk of cataracts can be lowered by eating 3½ servings of fruits or vegetables a day. Green leafy vegetables especially contain loads of nutrients for the eye. Pairing a healthy diet with exercise will reduce the risk of diabetes.

Take Supplements- Antioxidants have been shown to actually reduce the progression of some eye illnesses, including AMD. Vitamin A, riboflavin (vitamin B2), vitamin C and zinc are good sources to help maintain eye health.

Quit Smoking- Besides the typically known side effects of smoking including cancer, lung disease, etc., it also increases the risk for eye diseases.

Wear UV Eye Protection- When venturing outdoors, Prevent Blindness America recommends wearing brimmed hats in conjunction with UV-rated sunglasses (labeled: absorbs 99-100 percent of UV-A and UV-B rays). UV rays are extremely dangerous for the eyes.

Know Your Family History- Genetics plays a key role in eye disease. Research your family's health history and notify your eye care professional of any eye diseases that run in the family.

For more tips and information on the safe use of eye cosmetics and/or contact lens safety, please visit Prevent Blindness Ohio at www.pbohio.org or call 800-301-2020.

Prevent Blindness Ohio, founded in 1957, is Ohio's leading volunteer nonprofit public health organization dedicated to preventing blindness and preserving sight. We serve all 88 Ohio counties, providing direct services to more than 800,000 Ohioans annually and educating millions of consumers about what they can do to protect and preserve their precious gift of sight. Prevent Blindness Ohio is an affiliate of Prevent Blindness America, the country's second-oldest national voluntary health organization. For more information or to make a contribution, visit our website at www.pbohio.org or call 800-301-2020.

WOMEN'S EYE HEALTH AND SAFETY PSA

:30 PSA

IMPROPER USE OF EYE MAKEUP CAN LEAD TO EYE INFECTIONS, IRRITATIONS AND CORNEAL INJURIES. EYE MAKEUP IS A COMMON SOURCE OF PROBLEMS FOR CONTACT LENS WEARERS. PREVENT BLINDNESS OHIO OFFERS FREE TIPS ON HOW TO APPLY AND REMOVE EYE MAKEUP CORRECTLY AS WELL AS FREE INFORMATION ON HOW TO KEEP EYES HEALTHY WHEN WEARING CONTACT LENSES. PLEASE CALL PREVENT BLINDNESS OHIO AT 1-800-301-2020 OR VISIT WWW.PBOHIO.ORG TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE SAFE USE OF EYE COSMETICS AND CONTACT LENS CARE.

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2009 WOMEN'S EYE HEALTH & SAFETY TALKING POINTS

EYE MAKEUP

Improper use of eye cosmetics can lead to eye infections, irritations and corneal injuries. Prevent Blindness America states:

- Wash your hands before applying cosmetics. Some bacteria can be transferred from your hands to your eyes.
- Disposable applicators are the best to use, but keep all applicators clean and in good condition. Do not reuse old applicators.
- Cosmetics should be kept away from excessive heat and cold that could break down the preservatives, allowing bacteria to grow. Do not carry mascara in your purse or leave makeup in your car.
- Avoid "natural" and "preservative-free" products. Bacteria may thrive in these products.
- Moisture promotes the growth of bacteria so do not moisten cosmetics with water or saliva.
- Do not share your makeup with others or use someone else's makeup.
- Do not switch mascara brushes from one vial to another.

- Never apply makeup while driving or riding in a moving vehicle.
- To reduce the chance of allergic reaction, use cosmetics labeled “fragrance-free,” “hypoallergenic” or “for sensitive skin.”
- Always remove makeup every night. Never sleep with eye makeup on.
- Do not dye eyelashes or eyebrows. No color additives have been approved by the FDA for permanent dyeing or tinting of eyelashes or eyebrows.

COSMETICS AND CONTACT LENSES

Contact lens wearers should take extra precautions when applying or removing makeup in addition to properly caring for their lenses. Contact lens wearers should:

- Never apply skin creams moisturizers or other products too closely to the eye.
- Never share or trade contact lenses with others.
- Use pressed face powder or eye shadow. Always remove excess powder from lids and lashes.
- Never apply eyeliner to the inner eyelid as it can clog oil glands which can lead to irritation.
- Always wash hands before handling contacts and applying makeup.
- Always make sure the contact lens case is clean and replace it every three months.
- When cleaning lenses, use fresh solution, rub contact lenses with fingers, then rinse the lenses with solution before soaking them.

GENERAL WOMEN’S EYE HEALTH

- Of the 3.6 million Americans age 40 and older who are visually impaired, 2.3 million are women.
- Of the four leading eye diseases, women outnumber men in every category*:

Eye Disease	Total Number of Cases in Ohio	Total Number of Women’s Cases in Ohio
Age-related Macular Degeneration	92,504	61,672
Cataract	945,043	585,844
Glaucoma	93,852	57,763
Diabetic Retinopathy	171,467	88,715

*Based on data from the 2008 *Vision Problems in the U.S.* report from Prevent Blindness America and the National Eye Institute.

- According to *the Women's Eye Health Task Force*, risk factors for premature death due to heart disease or cancer are the same as those for blindness and vision impairment. These factors include, smoking; excess weight; imbalanced, unhealthy diet; lack of exercise and exposure to UV rays.

DRY EYE SYNDROME

- 3.2 million American women over the age of 50, or one in 12, have chronic dry eye.
- About 6 million women and 3 million men have moderate to severe symptoms of dry eye syndrome. Another 20-30 million people have mild cases of the disease. It affects women two to three times more than men. (Healthwomen.org)
- Menopause brings dry eyes because estrogen controls the tear glands, so a reduction in estrogen causes a reduction in tears. (*Corneal Research Laboratory, University of Rochester*).
- Some people are unable to produce enough natural tears, leaving the eyes dry and irritated. It is more frequent in postmenopausal and pregnant women, due to hormonal fluctuations. There is no cure, but the condition can usually be controlled through the use of over-the-counter eye drops (artificial tears).
- Hispanic and Asian women are more likely to be affected by symptoms of chronic dry eye. (Healthywomen.org)
- In rare cases, dry eye can become serious – leading to eye infections or a damaged cornea. That is why it is important to visit an eye care professional if you think you have dry eye.
- Using a humidifier, avoiding cigarette smoke, and using artificial tears and/or ointments can help relieve discomfort.
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