

Putting in and taking out soft contact lenses

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In short

Wash and dry your hands every time before you touch your lenses. Check each lens is the right way out before it goes in. Putting lenses in and taking them out gets easier with practice, and we teach you in the clinic before you take lenses home. Take your lenses out and call us if your eye becomes red or painful, or your vision changes.

For cleaning and storing your lenses, see [contact lens care and cleaning](#). For fitting, trial lenses and aftercare, see [contact lenses](#).

Before you start

- Wash your hands with soap and water, and dry them on a clean, lint-free towel. Soaps with added oils or fragrance can leave a film on the lens.
- Keep your fingernails short, so you do not scratch the lens or your eye.
- Always start with the same eye, so you do not mix up your right and left lenses.
- If you wear makeup, put your lenses in first, and take them out before you remove your makeup.

Check the lens is the right way out

Balance the lens on your fingertip and look at it from the side.

- **Right way out:** the lens forms a bowl or cup, with the edges pointing up.
- **Inside out:** the lens looks like a saucer or lid, with the edges turning out. Turn it the other way before it goes in.

Check for tears or damage at the same time. Do not wear a damaged lens.

Putting a lens in

- 1 Wash and dry your hands.
- 2 Take the lens out of its case or pack with your fingertips, not your nails. If it sticks to the case, give the case a gentle shake.
- 3 Rinse the lens with the solution you were given. Never use tap water.
- 4 Place the lens on the tip of the index or middle finger of the hand you write with, and check it is the right way out.
- 5 Looking in a mirror, hold your upper eyelid open with your other hand. Pull your lower eyelid down with a spare finger of the hand holding the lens.
- 6 Look ahead or up, and place the lens gently on your eye.
- 7 Let go of your eyelids slowly, close your eye and roll it around, then blink gently a few times. Check in the mirror that the lens is centred.
- 8 Repeat for the other eye.

If your vision is not clear or the lens does not feel right, it may be off-centre, inside out or damaged. Take it out, check it, rinse it and try again.

Taking a lens out

- 1 Wash and dry your hands.
- 2 Keep your chin down and look up. Pull your lower eyelid down with your middle finger. You can hold your upper eyelid with your other hand.
- 3 With your index finger, slide the lens down onto the white of your eye.
- 4 Gently pinch the lens off between the pads of your thumb and index finger. Never use your nails.

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If it is a daily disposable lens, throw it away. If it is a reusable lens, clean and store it as shown in [**contact lens care and cleaning**](#).

Some people find it easier to look towards their nose, slide the lens out towards the ear, and pinch it off from there. Use the method you were taught.

If a lens is stuck, moved or lost

- **A lens cannot get lost behind your eye.** A thin membrane stops it going any further.
- **If a lens has slid off-centre**, often after rubbing your eye, close the eye and gently massage the eyelid to move the lens back into place, or into the corner where it is easier to remove.
- **If a lens feels stuck or dry**, put in lubricating drops if you have them, wait a moment, then gently loosen the lens and take it out.
- **If you drop a lens**, clean it with your solution before it goes back in. Never wet a lens with saliva or water.
- **If you cannot find or remove a lens**, call us.

When to take your lenses out

Take your lenses out straight away, and do not put them back in, if your eye becomes red, painful, very watery or sensitive to light, if your vision becomes blurry, or if you notice a discharge. These can be signs of an eye infection. Keep a pair of glasses with your current prescription for times like these.

When to call us on (03) 9702 9118

Take your lenses out and call the same day if you have:

- A red or painful eye
- Sensitivity to light
- Blurred vision
- A discharge from the eye
- Pain that continues after the lens is out
- A lens you cannot find or remove

Call (03) 9702 9118

⚠ Go now to the Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital emergency department (32 Gisborne Street, East Melbourne, open 24 hours), or call 000, if

you have severe eye pain or a sudden loss of vision and cannot reach us.

For a contact lens fitting, help with handling or an aftercare check, book online or call us on (03) 9702 9118.

FAQs

— Can a contact lens get lost behind my eye?

No. A thin membrane stops a lens going behind the eye. If a lens has moved under your eyelid, gently massage the closed lid to move it back. Call us if you cannot find or remove it.

— How do I know if my lens is inside out?

Balance it on your fingertip. If it forms a bowl with the edges pointing up, it is the

right way out. If the edges flare out like a saucer, turn it over.

— **What should I do if I drop a lens?**

Clean and rinse it with your contact lens solution before it goes back in. Never use water or saliva.

— **Do I put my lenses in before or after makeup?**

Put your lenses in before you apply makeup, and take them out before you remove it.

— **What if I find it hard to put lenses in?**

It takes practice, and most people get there. We teach you in the clinic and check you can handle your lenses before you take them home. Call us if you are having trouble.
