

Promoting Eye Care Compliance Promotes Eye Health

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While the overall contact lens market shows an increasing trend in the number of contact lens wearers, there is also a significant number of patients who drop out of lenses each year. It's important to note that a good percentage of these "drop outs" may discontinue wearing contact lenses because of noncompliance issues.

Eye care practitioners are primarily interested in the safety and efficacy of the lens care systems we recommend to patients; however, we need to also recognize the fact that patients may be more predisposed toward a convenient and easy-to-use systems of contact lens wear and care, which may exacerbate a patient's noncompliant behavior.

Proper contact lens care and regular return visits to their eye care practitioner are essential for a patient's safety and wearing success. The reality is that greater compliance has a direct causal relationship on patients' contact lens comfort and health.

Why should you care?

There have been numerous studies in recent years that have looked at wear and care compliance among contact lens patients. The following are just a few examples of more than abundant statistics that have been published regarding compliance:

- Most healthcare providers say that only about one-third of patients will follow instructions exactly, one-third will follow some instructions and one-third will not follow instructions at all;
- 40 to 91 percent of contact lens patients are noncompliant in their recommended care and maintenance regimen;
- 25 to 50 percent of patients are noncompliant in some aspect of hygiene. One-fourth of patients don't always wash their hands prior to handling contact lenses and 12 percent never do;
- Up to 80 percent of contact lens complications trace back to poor patient compliance with recommended lens wear and care guidelines.¹

As the numbers show, practitioners and manufacturers continue to try, but their efforts still need reinforcement. Perhaps patients don't understand the message, don't grasp the potential consequences of noncompliance or, even more unfortunate, don't truly believe problems can happen to them.

As you may know, the FDA requires that solution manufacturers submit their labeling for review and clearance prior to introducing these products to the market. This ensures that proper instructions are provided to practitioners and patients alike. All eyecare providers should become familiar with the appropriate techniques for lens cleaning and disinfection of contact lenses as recommended by the solution manufacturer. This information is clearly outlined in the products' package inserts and should serve as a guide in providing wearers with proper instructions for lens care and disinfection.

Unfortunately, it is currently unrealistic to think that the majority of patients use their lens care products as outlined in the package inserts. Proper patient instruction is a key responsibility of the eyecare professional when prescribing and dispensing contact lenses. Whatever the reason for non-compliance, it's obvious that to ensure patient safety, contact lens wearing comfort and

minimize contact lens dropout, practitioners and manufacturers can all play an important role in diligently promoting contact lens wear and care compliance with patients.

Bausch & Lomb continues to take patient compliance seriously. You can further reinforce the compliance message to your patients by telling about a new initiative Bausch & Lomb recently launched called the *Wear&Care*™ program.

This program will provide your patients the information they need to enjoy healthy contact lens wear and provide them a variety of free products and materials that include: replacement contact lens cases, ReNu MultiPlus® Rewetting drops, an instructional DVD regarding proper lens care and handling as well as other materials – all at no cost. To learn more about the Bausch & Lomb *Wear&Care* program you can visit www.bausch.com and encourage patients to sign up for this free program.

1. *Contact Lens Spectrum*. Carmen F. Castellano, OD, FAAO. “10 Steps to Improving Contact Lens Compliance.” March 2004.