

## NEWS ALERT

### **BCLA warns: 'Don't cut corners on contact lens care during recession'**

The BCLA and the General Optical Council have today issued a press release to consumer media urging Britain's 3.5 million contact lens wearers not to endanger their eye health and comfort during the recession through risky contact lens practices.

The warning follows a YouGov poll, conducted jointly by the BCLA and GOC, that reveals nearly one in four contact lens wearers would consider switching their contact lens brand to save money, and more than one in 10 wearers would consider having less frequent check-ups. One in five would consider wearing the lenses for longer than recommended, such as using monthly lenses for more than a month, in order to cut costs.

The bodies point out although that, by law, contact lenses can only be supplied following a fitting by a registered eye care or medical practitioner, recent reports suggest that some contact lens wearers are switching to cheaper lenses without having the new lenses fitted. The release highlights the fact that when lenses are not properly fitted, wearers may experience a range of side-effects, from minor discomfort and blurred vision to more serious adverse reactions such as red, inflamed eyes.

Professor Roger Buckley, clinical adviser to the GOC, commented: 'In the current economic climate, it's understandable that contact lens wearers are looking to save money. But without a proper fitting, patients could be putting not only their comfort but also the health of their eyes at risk. It's essential that patients follow the advice of their eye care practitioner when it comes to contact lens care.'

The BCLA's position is that contact lens wearers should not change their prescribed lens type, wearing schedule, replacement frequency, solutions or care procedures without the recommendation of their eye care practitioner.

Other examples of high-risk contact lens practices include:

- Wearing a damaged or torn lens instead of replacing it.
- Cutting down on lens cleaning to save on solutions costs.
- Switching to solutions that may not be compatible with the eye or lens
- Sleeping in lenses not suitable for overnight wear to avoid buying solutions.

The BCLA and GOC have produced a leaflet on 'Buying Contact Lenses' to encourage safe practice among consumers buying contact lenses. The leaflet is available on the BCLA website, [www.bcla.org.uk](http://www.bcla.org.uk), and BCLA members can order copies for use in their practices.

Visit the BCLA website for information on all the Association's activities or contact [vfreeman@bcla.org.uk](mailto:vfreeman@bcla.org.uk), tel +44 (0)207 580 6661 or fax +44 (0)207 580 6669. To change or remove your email address or to submit news, email [news@bcla.org.uk](mailto:news@bcla.org.uk).