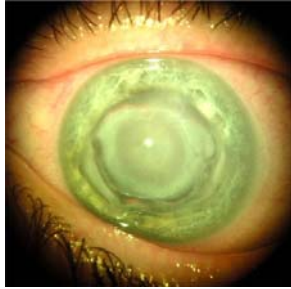
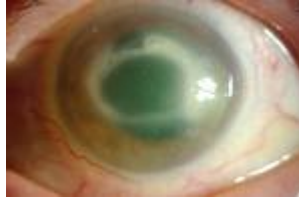


AMOEBIA EYE INFECTIONS ON THE INCREASE

Acanthamoeba keratitis is a disease where a living organism is found in the eye. It was first diagnosed in 1973 and while it is considered to be relatively rare, it has been increasing significantly over the last 20 years. Acanthamoeba infection is one of the major risks associated with wearing contact lenses, so with their increase in popularity, the occurrence of the keratitis due to acanthamoeba would be expected to do so too. Treatment of the condition is often expensive and lengthy and may even require surgery, thus proper contact lens care and hygiene is the best prevention.



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Key risk factors for infection in contact lens wearers:

- Use of tap water in cleaning and disinfecting contact lenses – including the lens case.
- Swimming with contact lenses in, especially in fresh water lakes and rivers.
- Failure to follow lens care instructions/poor compliance.

Key symptoms:

- Red, (frequently) painful eye infection – especially if it is not improving with treatment.
- Foreign body sensation, tearing, light sensitivity and blurred vision.
- Red irritated eyes lasting for unusually long period of time after removal of contact lenses.

Lens care guide:

- Always wash hands before handling contact lenses.
- Rub and rinse the surface of the contact lens before storing.
- Use only sterile products recommended by your optometrist to clean and disinfect your lenses. Saline solution and rewetting drops are not designed to disinfect lenses.
- Avoid using tap water to wash and or store contact lenses.
- Contact lens solution must be discarded upon opening the case, and fresh solution used each time the lens is placed in the case.
- Replace lenses using your doctor's prescribed schedule.
- Do not sleep in contact lenses unless prescribed by your doctor and never after swimming.
- Never swap lenses with someone else.
- Never put contact lenses in your mouth.
- See your optometrist regularly for contact lens evaluation.
- If you experience redness, secretions, visual blurring or pain (RSVP), return to your optometrist immediately.