

Press Release

Media Contact: Grey Healthcare
Dorothy Yung : 2510 6765 / 9363 0084
Ellena Kam : 2510 6794 / 9171 8201
Giselle Cheng : 2510 6723/ 6221 3124

Wetting ability of contact lens solution overlooked, survey finds Compatibility of lens and solution is crucial, specialist advises

The recent food safety incidents such as melamine contamination and bogus egg, as well as the product recall of contact lens solution, have put consumers on the guard of product safety. Although consumers pay high attention to the safety of contact lens solution, yet the optometrist respondents thought the consumers had overlooked its wetting ability, a survey has found. Even worse, consumers had also overlooked the consequence of incompatibility of contact lens and solution, which may aggravate dry eye symptoms suffered by many contact lens wearers. Hong Kong Society of Professional Optometrists said that incompatibility of contact lens and solution may result in corneal staining and even worse, infiltrative keratitis, which may claim sufferer's eyesight eventually. Thus, the Society reminded consumers to be vigilant about the wetting ability of contact lens solution and the compatibility of lens and solution as well.

The Hong Kong Society of Professional Optometrists had commissioned Public Opinion Programme at the University of Hong Kong to conduct two surveys during January and February 2009 in a bid to gauge consumers' concern of contact lens solution. The survey findings of 180 optometrists and 503 contact lens wearers aged 18 to 50 years old who had worn contact lens and used contact lens solution in the past ten years were presented by Dr. Robert Ting-Yiu Chung, Director of the Public Opinion Programme of the University of Hong Kong, in today's press conference.

Product recall cost consumer's trust

The optometrists interviewed in the survey considered that the product recall incidents happened two to three years ago had jeopardized consumers' confidence in contact lens solution. 70 per cent said that there was an increased consumer enquiry about product safety after the incidents. 57 per cent of those who was on-the-job at that time admitted that the incidents had affected consumers' trust. With regard to the source of product origin, 57 per cent of optometrists interviewed said they had more trust in contact lens solutions produced in the U.S. whereas none had trust in products manufactured in mainland China.

Contact lens wearers worried about product safety

92 per cent of contact lens wearers interviewed in the survey yearned for safety of contact lens solution. On disinfection ability, 96 per cent of them said that they wanted a contact lens solution that can eradicate bacteria, fungi and amoeba. On product safety, close to 90 per cent said both the product ingredient and the production process had to be safe. With regard to the source of product origin, 69 per cent of contact lens wearers interviewed said they had more trust in contact lens solutions produced in the U.S. whereas none had indicated trust in products manufactured in mainland China.

Dry eye problem prevalent and severe

Close to 70 per cent of contact lens wearers interviewed said they had experienced dry eye symptoms when wearing contact lens. 52 per cent said that their eyes were so dry that their contact lenses dropped or moved, which suggested the significance of the issue. Despite the severity of the symptoms, only 29 per cent of optometrists interviewed said that contact lens wearers cared about the wetting ability of contact lens solution, which suggests a need of education.

Consumers: contact lens solution should help manage dry eye symptoms

Dry eye symptoms are nuisance to contact lens wearers; thus 86 per cent of them hoped that their contact lens solution could keep their eyes wet and allow them to wear their contact lens for an extended period of time. 77 per cent hoped to get rid of eye drops or artificial tears.

Not all contact lens solutions fit silicone hydrogel contact lenses

86 per cent of optometrists interviewed said the demand of silicone hydrogel with high permeability of oxygen was on the rise in recent years; yet 93 per cent of contact lens wearers interviewed were not aware the fact that not all contact lens solutions were compatible with silicone hydrogel. Even worse, 61 per cent of contact lens wearers interviewed did not realize that an incompatibility of lens and solution would cause discomfort to eyes.

Using wrong contact lens solution may aggravate dry eye disease

According to Ms. Rufina Chan, President of Hong Kong Society of Professional Optometrists, wearing contact lens is a key reason for dry eye disease. Contact lens forms a barrier impeding oxygen from passing through the cornea. Natural tear is essential to keeping the lens wet so as to allow oxygen to pass through. The new generation of silicone hydrogel is made of a material with a higher permeability of oxygen yet still requires tears for wetting the lens. Severe dry eye symptoms may result during extended period of wearing. Air-conditioned environment would further aggravate dry eye symptoms, which include feeling dry, sore and gritty. Even worse, some wearers may become light-phobic, experience temporary blurry or deterioration of eyesight, and suffer from reflective unhealthy tear secretion. At worst, the corneal cell may be damaged and stained (corneal staining) which may cost the eyesight eventually.

In addition, some studies revealed that certain multifunctional contact lens solution containing preservative Biguanide when used on silicone hydrogel may exacerbate corneal staining.

TearGlyde®: new ingredient for improving dry eye symptoms

TearGlyde® is the first Tear Actuating Complex that conditions lenses to retain surface moisture for enhanced comfort for upto 14 hours, much longer than the 6 hours of other contact lens solutions. It works synergistically with wearers' own tears to allow a thin layer of moisture to be maintained on the lens surface throughout the day. Clinical study has proven that silicone hydrogel wearers needed significantly fewer rewetting drops throughout the day when used with the new contact lens solution. Hong Kong people are used to working overtime for upto 13 hours and thus may find the new contact lens solution helpful.

New solution: High compatible disinfection

The new solution that contains POLYQUAD, a Biguanide-free preservative, is safe and compatible with all soft lenses, inclusive of silicon hydrogel lens. Its disinfection efficacy has met the highest standards and has significantly reduced corneal staining. The new contact lens solution that contains TearGlyde® is produced in the U.S. and had obtained the approval of Food & Drug Administration.

Choose a solution that promises biocompatibility and reconditioning across all soft lens types

Hong Kong Society of Professional Optometrists advised contact lens wearers to pay attention to both safety and wetting ability of contact lens solution. At the same time, contact lens wearers should consult optometrists on the material of contact lens and choose those contact lens solutions that ensure biocompatibility and reconditioning across all soft lens types. Most important of all, contact lens wearers should undergo regular check for their eyes.

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