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Improper Contact Lens Use Increases Healthcare Costs & Time Away from Work

**CDC Announces First Annual Contact Lens Health Week:
November 17th-21st!**

Due to the significant healthcare impact of unhealthy contact lens care, the CDC announced a campaign that starts this week to heighten public awareness of the medical problems associated with wearing contact lenses. The ultimate goal is to promote healthy contact lens wear and care practices to help reduce the risk for eye infections and complications associated with poor contact lens hygiene.

The most serious and common eye infection associated with contact lens wearers is microbial keratitis. Keratitis is a serious, sometimes blinding inflammation of the cornea as a result of trauma or bacteria in the eye. This serious and costly infection can be prevented if proper contact lens hygiene is practiced.

The CDC reports nearly 1 million episodes of keratitis or other contact lens disorders takes place every year with an expensive price tag of \$175 million in healthcare expenses. The average cost to treat keratitis at a doctor's office visit is \$151 and a visit to the emergency room to treat this eye infection is \$587.

Microbial keratitis is preventable by AVOIDING these common mistakes in contact lens care:

- Wearing contacts through the night
- Topping off saline solution in your case from the night before
- Infrequent storage case replacement
- Not washing hands

Patient education about healthy contact lens wear and care practice is essential. About 38 million people wear contact lenses. The CDC estimates about 1-10 % suffer from keratitis.

Additional information on Contact Lens Health Week and the proper wear and care of contact lenses is available at <http://www.cdc.gov/contactlenses>, and <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6345a3.htm>