

Statement from the American Academy of Ophthalmology regarding Circle Lenses

New decorative contact lenses called circle lenses are an emerging and potentially dangerous trend among teenagers and young adults. In response to this, the American Academy of Ophthalmology (Academy) would like to alert consumers to the hazards of buying any decorative lenses, including circle lenses, without a prescription. Any type of contact lens is a medical device that requires a prescription, proper fitting by an eye care professional and a commitment to proper care by the consumer.

Inflammation and pain can occur from improperly fitted, over-the-counter lenses and lead to more serious problems including corneal abrasions and blinding infections.

Although over-the-counter sales of nonprescription "plano" cosmetic lenses have been illegal in the United States since 2005, they are still widely available without prescription in retail stores and on the Internet. In 2005, an Academy-backed federal law classified all contact lenses as medical devices and restricted their distribution to licensed eye care professionals.

To protect your eyes, all contact lenses must be fitted by an eye care professional. If you have any pain, burning, redness, tearing or sensitivity to light while wearing any type of contact lenses, see your ophthalmologist, an Eye M.D. For more information about contact lenses, go to www.geteyesmart.org.

About the American Academy of Ophthalmology:

The American Academy of Ophthalmology is the world's largest association of eye physicians and surgeons—Eye M.D.s—with more than 29,000 members worldwide. Eye health care is provided by the three "O's" – opticians, optometrists and ophthalmologists. It is the ophthalmologist, or Eye M.D., who can treat it all: eye diseases and injuries, and perform eye surgery. To find an Eye M.D. in your area, visit the Academy's Web site at www.aao.org.