

# Contact Lens Care Compliance Can Drive In-Store Sales.

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Every day contact lens and lens care solution manufacturers strive to make products that are safer and easier for patients to use. As an optometrist, I know that eye care practitioners like me are primarily interested in safety and efficacy; however, we recognize that patients are more likely to comply with convenient and easy-to-use systems of contact lens wear and care. It's common to see safety and compliance messaging regarding contact lenses in an eye care practitioner's office and on the lens solution's packaging. However, a critical intersection where that compliance message could and should be reinforced is at the retail shelf – and here's why.

**Patients are more likely to comply with convenient and easy-to-use products.**

While the overall contact lens market shows an increasing trend in the number of contact lens wearers, there is also a significant number of patients who drop out of lens wear each year. It's important to note that a good percentage of these "drop outs" may discontinue wearing contact lenses because of noncompliance issues. Retailers and pharmacists should be concerned about this trend because fewer contact lens wearers, using less lens care solutions, ultimately means fewer sales of these lens care products at the shelf.

**A good percentage of "drop-outs" stop wearing contact lenses because of noncompliance issues.**

Proper contact lens care and regular return visits to their eye care practitioner are essential for a patient's safety and wearing success. The reality is that greater compliance has a direct causal relationship on patients' contact lens comfort and health, and that is why we need to take contact lens compliance very seriously.

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## Why should you care?

The issue of non-compliance in contact lens wear is real. There have been numerous studies in recent years that have looked at wear and care compliance among contact lens patients. The following are just a few examples of more than abundant statistics that have been published regarding compliance:

- Up to 80 percent of contact lens complications trace back to poor patient compliance with recommended lens wear and care guidelines.<sup>1</sup>
- 40 to 91 percent of contact lens patients are noncompliant in their recommended care and maintenance regimen
- 25 to 50 percent of patients are non compliant in some aspect of hygiene.
- One-fourth of patients don't always wash their hands prior to handling contact lenses and 12 percent never do;
- Most healthcare providers say that only about one-third of patients will follow instructions exactly, one-third will follow some instructions and one-third will not follow instructions at all.

As the numbers show, practitioners and manufacturers continue to try, but their efforts still need reinforcement. Perhaps patients don't understand the message, don't grasp the potential consequences of noncompliance or, even more unfortunate, don't truly believe problems can happen to them.

Whatever the reason for non-compliance, it's obvious that to ensure patient safety, contact lens wearing comfort and minimize contact lens dropout, practitioners, manufacturers, retailers and pharmacists can all play an important role in diligently promoting contact lens wear and care compliance with patients.

## Up to 80 percent of contact lens complications trace back to poor patient compliance

### Conclusion

One of the reasons for contact lens dropouts increase is because of the wide discrepancy between what patients should do (in complying with healthy wear and care) and what they actually do. It stands to reason that promoting the compliance message in the eye care professionals office; on the manufacturers' package and at retail will not only help increase lens care product sales to a level that's closer to the recommended usage for healthy outcomes for the user but also keep patients in the contact lens franchise and create even healthier bottom lines for retailers who carry products that help compliance.

Retailers who align themselves with a proactive compliance message in support of consumers' healthy contact lens care habits will ultimately benefit from a healthier bottom line.

1. *Contact Lens Spectrum*. Carmen F. Castellano, OD, FAAO. "10 Steps to Improving Contact Lens Compliance." March 2004.

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