

Acanthamoeba Keratitis

Act immediately on eye pain

Contact lens wearers who experience any kind of unusual pain in their eyes should visit their ophthalmic optician straight away, advises the Eyecare Trust. The recommendation comes in the wake of a new report suggesting that contact lens wearers in hard water areas of England are more at risk of developing a serious eye infection than those in the rest of the country and highlights the importance of following simple hygiene procedures.

Although very rare, Acanthamoeba Keratitis is an extremely painful sight-threatening condition caused by an amoeba found in almost all soil, fresh water, sea water and even air. It is known to thrive where limescale and bacteria are present, but contact lens wearers are at highest risk if they clean their lenses or lens cases in tap water, or if they swim, shower or bathe while wearing their lenses. So, NEVER rinse the lenses or lens cases with tap water. Don't even use distilled water. You should always follow the manufacturer's instructions and clean lenses regularly in the correct sterile solutions recommended by your optical practitioner.

When used and cared for properly contact lenses offer an excellent form of vision correction for many people. The pain associated with Acanthamoeba Keratitis is often far worse than the inflammation of the eye that can accompany it. The condition requires immediate treatment so don't wait until visible signs appear.

Information on Acanthamoeba Keratitis and other eye conditions is available on the Eyecare Trust's website www.eyecare.org.uk. The Trust also publishes a leaflet on wearing and caring for contact lenses, available free from opticians.

Factsheet

The Eyecare Trust is a registered charity that exists to promote awareness of all aspects of eye health. For more information call our public information line on 0845 129 5001 or log on to www.eyecaretrust.org.uk

