

Talking with children and parents about contact lenses

Professional advice from the experts



Picking up on a child's inherent energy and enthusiasm will help you connect with them, and will help them pay closer attention to your recommendations. When talking with children and parents about contact lenses, consider the child's motivation to wear them, hygiene, maturity level and parental support. Below are some ideas on how to broach the topic of wearing contact lenses with your young patients.

General communication tips:

- Talk to each patient directly and at eye level. Move a chair next to them, sit down and have a conversation at their height.
- Pace your conversation to match the patient's comfort level. If you normally speak quickly with your adult patients, try slowing down for younger patients. If you are not engaging them, adjust your tempo accordingly.
- Give the patient a contact lens to hold and examine. To emphasize good lens care, make sure their hands are clean prior to handling; if not, let them wash their hands.
- Consider scheduling several young patients back-to-back, especially if you are just starting to fit kids. This will accelerate your learning curve, both in fitting them and interacting with them.
- After fitting a child or teen with contact lenses, reiterate the rules of proper lens care to help ensure compliance. Assure them that if they follow the rules, they shouldn't have any problems.
- Ask the patient to repeat care instructions you or your staff have provided to ensure understanding. Consider providing a Patient Instruction Guide (available at jnjvisioncare.co.uk) to help maintain good habits as the patient becomes more comfortable with wearing and caring for contact lenses.
- Relax! Enjoy the energy young patients bring to you, your staff and your practice.

Talking with young patients:

- Pose a simple question: "Have you thought about wearing contact lenses?" Even if the patient isn't ready yet, the question plants a seed for the

future. You may be surprised by the response from young patients who are already used to the idea of contact lenses.

- Ask about favorite activities (sports, dance, theatre, etc.), then suggest using contact lenses as a backup or replacement for eyeglasses during these activities.
- If a child expresses interest, draw the parent into the conversation.

Talking with the parent:

- Gauge the parent's comfort level with the topic of contact lenses — in general and for the patient.
- Assure both child and parent that your staff will provide individual and thorough training on insertion, removal, care and replacement to help dispel any fears.
- Respect the parent's opinion concerning whether the child is ready for contact lenses. Offer a Patient Instruction Guide to review at home and offer to have a staff member call to answer questions in a week or two.
- Revisit the topic during the patient's next visit.

Learn more about kids and contacts at jnjvisioncare.co.uk

Always rely on your professional expertise to judge each young patient's maturity level and the degree of parental support before deciding whether a child is a good candidate for contact lens wear and can follow your recommended wear and care instructions. Always rely on your professional expertise to judge each young patient's maturity level and the degree of parental support before deciding whether a child is a good candidate for contact lens wear and can follow your recommended wear and care instructions.