

The Really Scary Stuff at Halloween – Eye Safety

Ottawa, ON (October 27, 2014) - Over the last few years decorative contact lenses have become a popular part of Halloween costumes. Although their effects can be startling, their impact on your eyes can be horrific.

Not all contact lenses are equal. Decorative lenses from unlicensed manufacturers may be made from inferior materials or may contain toxic dyes. Without proper training people may not use proper hygiene in inserting, cleaning or removing the lenses. The result can be eye infections which in some cases may even lead to vision loss. The challenges posed by cosmetic contact lenses have become so acute that government regulation has been proposed by M.P. Pat Davidson. Health Minister Rona Ambrose recently announced that Health Canada will be consulting on new guidance for industry that will lead to non-corrective or 'cosmetic' contact lenses being regulated as medical devices.

Canadians are advised that if they have used a pair of cosmetic contact lenses and blurred vision, redness, discomfort, swelling or discharge occurs, they should stop using the lenses immediately and see a doctor of optometry.

Dr. Paul Geneau, President of the Canadian Association of Optometrists (CAO) warns, "If you can't resist the allure of cosmetic contact lenses, make sure you purchase them from a licensed eye care professional." A doctor of optometry can ensure that lenses are ordered from a licensed manufacturer.

Although cosmetic contacts pose a significant concern, the CAO advises Canadians to think about their overall safety at Halloween.

Additional Safety Tips

- When choosing makeup, stick to products that are hypo-allergenic and make sure that any additives to face paint are approved (check the [recalls list at Health Canada](#) if you are unsure).
- When applying makeup near or around the eye, stay away from the lid and lash line—the area where you would normally apply eyeliner. If you are applying makeup very close to the eye, use only products approved for use in that area such as an eyeliner or eye shadow.
- Do not use blush or lip-liner to create a "red" effect, as some ingredients may not be approved for use near the eye and bacteria from the face and mouth can be transmitted to the eye.
- Avoid sharp or pointy objects such as swords in costumes. If your child must carry a sword, makes sure it is secured to the outfit. If your child does get poked in the eye, thoroughly inspect it for any signs of redness, decreased vision or pain. Eye injuries may be more serious than they appear. If your child reports pain or blurred vision in the eye or if the eye is



discolored or bloodshot, you should take your child to see a doctor of optometry as soon as possible.

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