



News Release

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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Don't Wear Decorative Contact Lenses Without Consulting an Eye Care Professional, CDPH Warns

SACRAMENTO – California Department of Public Health (CDPH) Director and State Public Health Officer Dr. Karen Smith today warned consumers about the risks associated with wearing decorative contact lenses without proper consultation with an eye care professional.



Decorative contact lenses are lenses that do not correct vision and are intended to temporarily change the appearance of the eye. Use of these lenses can carry serious risks, including permanent eye injury that may lead to blindness.

Advertised as color, cosmetic, fashion and theatrical contact lenses, they are especially popular around Halloween. These decorative contact lenses are typically sold at beauty supply stores and novelty stores.

All decorative contact lenses currently approved or cleared under the federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act are classified as prescription medical devices and, therefore, may be sold only to or on the prescription of a licensed practitioner.

Wearing any kind of contact lens, including decorative lenses, can cause serious injury if not used correctly. The risks include infection, ulcers, decreased vision, cuts or scratches to the surface of the eye, itchiness or redness. If these conditions are left untreated, the injuries can progress rapidly. In most severe cases, blindness and eye loss can occur.

Consumers who have experienced any injury or illness with decorative contact lenses should contact their health care provider or contact CDPH at 1-800-495-3232.

www.cdph.ca.gov

