

Buying Contacts Online

Buying contact lenses on the Internet, by phone, or by mail can be handy. But buyers should be careful.

You need an up-to-date, correct prescription. Your state laws decide when a prescription expires. It may be one or two years. Some states leave it to your doctor to decide.

The prescription should include:

- Your name
- Lens measurements
- The contact lens brand and material
- Your doctor's name

Some prescriptions also include:

- Whether lenses are for daily wear or extended wear
- Whether a different kind of lens material can be used
- The date your prescription expires
- The number of refills

Internet sites and mail-order companies must get your doctor's approval of the prescription. If they don't, they are breaking federal law. That's why many ask

for your doctor's name and phone number. Some states need written prescriptions.

Order your lenses from a company you know you can trust.

Ask for written information about your contact lenses from the company. It should tell you how to use the lenses, and tell you about the risks and benefits.

Don't take a chance on using an old prescription

Ask your eye doctor how often you should have check-ups. See the doctor regularly. The check-ups give your doctor a chance to check the fit of your lenses and change your prescription as your eyes change. Lenses that don't fit can hurt your eyes.

Always contact your doctor for advice. A doctor can see early signs of damage that can lead to serious problems, even blindness. You may not notice these signs in their early stages.



Buying Contacts Online

Make sure you get what you asked for

Watch out! Some online or mail-order sellers may send you a different brand. Contact lenses may look the same, but materials and shapes change by brand. Be sure you get what you asked for. Make sure that the company gives you this information:

- Brand name
- Lens name
- Power
 - Sphere
 - Cylinder, if any
 - Axis, if any
- Diameter
- Base curve
- Peripheral curves, if any

FDA Office of Women's Health <http://www.fda.gov/womens>

To Learn More:

FDA Center for Devices and Radiological Health

Phone: 1-888-INFO-FDA (1-888-463-6332)

<http://www.fda.gov/cdrh/contactlenses/buying.html>

Always contact your doctor for medical advice.