

Contact Lenses, Glasses And Children

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Statement from the American Academy of Ophthalmology regarding July 26, 2010 Pediatrics Journal Study

Emergency Department Visits for Medical Device-Associated Adverse Events Among Children

An FDA-study published on July 26 in Pediatrics titled "Emergency Department Visits for Medical Device-Associated Adverse Events Among Children" has brought to light the alarming rate of ER visits linked to contact lens injuries such as infections and abrasions. The study, which reviewed medical records from emergency departments at 100 hospitals between 2004 and 2005, estimated that nearly 34,000 (or 23 percent) of cases a year were due to contact lens injury in children and teens. The majority of these contact lens injuries occurred among teenagers between the ages of 16 and 21 years of age, followed by children between the ages of 11 and 15 years of age.

The findings support the American Academy of Ophthalmology's (Academy) long-standing position that contact lenses are medical devices that require a prescription, proper fitting by an eye care professional and a commitment to proper care by the consumer. When children and teenagers use these devices it is especially important that both children and caregivers understand the risks.

The study does not document whether the contact lens injuries were acquired through lenses obtained by a prescription from an eye care professional or illegally through over-the-counter or Internet sales (as many decorative lenses are). Nonetheless, even under the best supervision, injury and infections can occur. That is why it is imperative that all contact lenses must be fitted by an eye care professional. If your child experiences pain, burning, redness, tearing or sensitivity to light while wearing any type of contact lenses, see your ophthalmologist, an Eye M.D.