

Contact lens lost in eye ^[1]

Dear Alice,

I lost my contact in my eye. What should I do?

Answer

Dear reader,

Eye, caramba! As annoying and frustrating as a contact lens gone awry, or bye-bye, can be, it's wise to take a deep breath, wash your hands and face (if possible), and gather up patience before you go hunting for it.

First, grab both your saline solution and your contact lens case. Then, try to look for the lens in your affected eye. The good news is that due to the structure of the eye, a contact lens can't actually 'get lost' in your eye. There's a membrane called the conjunctiva that lines the eyelid and meets with the sclera (a tough layer that covers the entire eye) in order to keep out foreign particles from the rest of the eye. Most likely, the lens can be found under the upper eyelid. Whether it's a soft or hard lens, use a good amount of saline solution in the eye before attempting removal. If you're having trouble finding the lens, resting the eye by leaving it closed for a while can make it easier for your lens to reappear. If this doesn't work for you and you wear soft contact lenses, pulling down your lower lid or the skin below the eye with clean fingers and then trying to blink may help you in your search. You'll probably have to do this several times, sometimes with the help of some saline solution or eye drops.

Once you locate the lens, try to move it, using light fingertip touch, on top of your cornea (the clear part of the eye that covers your iris and pupil). Doing this will make removing the lens much easier. Just make sure not to use your fingernails to move the lens around, so you don't end up scratching your eye!

It's also possible that the contact lens has already come out, but you feel that something is still there because your eye is irritated. To relieve some of this discomfort, try rinsing or bathing the affected eye with cool water or using over-the-counter eye drops. If the irritation persists and/or you still can't remove the contact lens from your eye, it might be best to make a visit to a health care provider or ophthalmologist — it's possible you've scratched your eye and that can be

painful! Best of luck to you... and go easy on your eye(s)!

Alice!

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