

HEALTH ALERT

DECORATIVE CONTACT LENSES



The California Department of Public Health's Food and Drug Branch (FDB) is warning consumers about the adverse health effects associated with the misuse of decorative contact lenses, also referred to as cosmetic, costume or fashion contact lenses.



Contact lenses, including decorative contact lenses, are soft or hard lenses worn on the eye and are classified by the [US Food and Drug Administration \(FDA\)](#) as medical devices and should be sold or dispensed by prescription only, by licensed eye care professionals.

Decorative contact lenses change the look of the eyes and may not correct vision. They are often sold over-the-counter as cosmetics, and may be available in salons, beauty supply stores, Halloween stores, convenience shops as well as on internet sites, all without a prescription. Such sale of contact lenses is illegal. In addition, some of these may be counterfeit devices that have not been approved by the FDA. Improvements in manufacturing have made counterfeit lenses more available and more dangerous. Use of unprescribed and counterfeit contact lenses may severely harm consumers.

CDPH is calling attention to the following important considerations regarding decorative contact lenses:

- Sale of decorative contact lenses without a prescription is illegal even if they do not correct vision
- They are not one-size-fits-all
- Proper fit of contact lenses by eye care professionals must be determined for each individual's eyes
- A poor fit often results in severe eye damage including:
 - itchiness or redness
 - eye pain
 - corneal scratches
 - corneal infections
 - poor vision
 - even blindness and eye-loss



For more information on healthy contact lens wear and care, visit the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's website](#). View [FDA's website](#) for more information on decorative contact lenses and watch this [video](#) for more on the dangers of decorative contact lenses and on what CDPH is doing to protect consumers. Consumers can report the illegal sale of decorative contact lenses to initiate an investigation.