

Consumers Can Help Prevent Harmful Medication Incidents

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Reminder: Contact Lens Cleaning Solutions with Hydrogen Peroxide May Cause Eye Injury

Some contact lens cleaning solutions contain hydrogen peroxide. These cleaning solutions that contain hydrogen peroxide must not be used directly in the eye or as a rinsing solution for lenses. In the past, SafeMedicationUse.ca has warned consumers about the risk of painful eye injuries if these solutions are used incorrectly. Health Canada provided similar warnings in communications published in April 2013 and February 2016. Health Canada also asked manufacturers to update the labels of Canadian products to highlight the risks of improper use.

Our previous alerts described incidents with the product Clear Care, which contains 3% hydrogen peroxide. We have since received a report from a consumer who soaked his lenses in a store-brand contact lens cleaning solution that contained hydrogen peroxide. The product was Life Brand Lens Care System, which contains 3.3% hydrogen peroxide. To safely use this product, the contact lenses must be placed in a special case containing a disk that neutralizes the hydrogen peroxide. The consumer did not follow the directions for using the special case. As a result, the hydrogen peroxide was not neutralized, and the patient experienced painful burning and watering of the eyes after he inserted his contact lenses. The consumer knew he was not using the product as directed, but he did not feel that the warnings printed on the package were adequate. Fortunately, the consumer did not experience any lasting harm to his eyes.

ISMP Canada has advised Health Canada and Shoppers Drug Mart of the problem.

If you know about other incidents involving contact lens solutions, please tell us about them by [submitting a report](http://www.safemedicationuse.ca/report/). (www.safemedicationuse.ca/report/)



SafeMedicationUse.ca has the following advice for consumers:

- Don't assume that all contact lens cleaning solutions are the same. Several products containing hydrogen peroxide are now available in Canada. These products can look a lot like multipurpose contact lens solutions.
- Before purchasing or using any product for use on your contact lenses or in your eye, read the package labels and inserts carefully. Even products that are available without a prescription can cause serious harm if not used as directed.
- Be sure to carefully read the labels and instructions of the product you have selected before you prepare your contact lenses for cleaning or rinsing.
- When using any contact lens solution containing hydrogen peroxide, follow the directions carefully, step by step, to ensure the hydrogen peroxide is fully neutralized before you reinsert the lenses into your eyes.
- To avoid mix-ups at home, keep lens cleaning solutions containing hydrogen peroxide in a location separate from where you keep solutions for rinsing or moisturizing your lenses.

Tips for Practitioners

- Before selling or recommending a hydrogen peroxide-based contact lens cleaning solution, confirm the intended use of the product and educate consumers about proper use.
- Do not display hydrogen peroxide-based contact lens cleaning solutions beside multipurpose solutions. Organizations that use company-wide shelving plans (such as planograms) should review the placement of these products to reduce the risk of selection errors.
- In community pharmacies, consider storing hydrogen peroxide-based solutions behind the counter.
- Share this SafeMedicationUse.ca alert with consumers and patients. Consider posting a copy of the alert near displays of hydrogen peroxide-based lens cleaning solutions.



Read our previous alert about [Eye Injuries Involving Clear Care](http://www.safemedicationuse.ca/alerts/alerts_ClearCare.html).
(www.safemedicationuse.ca/alerts/alerts_ClearCare.html)

Medication safety bulletins contribute to Global Patient Safety Alerts

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