

# Halloween costume trend bad news for eyes

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- Cosmetic Contact Lens rapidly growing to become a \$1bn global industry
- ABDO warns of dangers of not taking proper precautions
- 61% of Brits would buy contact lenses from a source other than an optician

As we approach Halloween, the Association of British Dispensing Opticians (ABDO) is encouraging people to take more care when using cosmetic lenses as part of their Halloween costume. New research from ABDO reveals Brits have a concerning lack of knowledge when it comes to looking after their eyes.

The survey of 2,000 women revealed that over half (54%) of respondents did not know that a contact lens could cause damage to the eye if not correctly fitted and 56% did not think it was important to seek professional help when purchasing lenses. Perhaps even more worryingly, 61% of those asked would buy lenses from a non-medical source such as an online retailer or marketplace, fancy dress shop or even a market-stall.

Commenting on the dangers of using coloured contact lenses, Contact Lens Optician Daryl Newsome of ABDO says,

‘An ill-fitting contact lens could starve the cornea of oxygen which can cause the cornea to temporarily go cloudy if the lens is worn for a short period or even cause severe and sight threatening reactions if the lens is left in too long.’

Latest estimates report that the worldwide cosmetic contact lens industry will be worth over \$1.3 billion by 2024. With growth in the entertainment sector’s dramatic make-up driving consumer trends, cosmetic contact lenses as a key part of a Halloween costume is a trend that is set to continue.

ABDO’s research also found as many as 61% of Brits did not know that incorrectly fitted contact lenses can cause permanent damage to the eyes and over a third, 38%, would go and see a GP instead of an optician to resolve eye soreness and discomfort, despite the fact opticians are often best placed to deal with minor eye conditions.

Daryl Newsome has some advice on who the best person is to seek help from if you have a problem:

‘Visiting a suitably qualified and experienced eye care professional for the contact lens fitting coupled with good advice regarding wearing schedules and lens care products is critical to the happy and successful use of any contact lenses including novelty Halloween lenses.

The law in the U.K. stipulates unqualified people are not allowed to supply the public with lenses without a written and signed copy of a contact lens specification. Novelty shops and market traders that do this are breaking U.K. law!

If you wouldn't buy prescription medicines from a market trader because you know this is wrong, why would you risk your eyesight buying unknown products from an unregistered seller who won't be able to teach you how to insert and remove the lenses, let alone deal with any consequences if anything should go wrong?'

'Don't let fun be a reason to compromise your eyesight! Visit a professional you can trust.'

This October, don't risk your Halloween costume becoming permanent, take proper care of your eyes.

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

All statistics, unless specified, are from research conducted by Vital Research and Statistics on behalf of the Association of British Dispensing Opticians and must be credited for use.

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