

NEWS FROM SCDCA

South Carolina Department of Consumer Affairs



Brandolyn Thomas Pinkston, Administrator

October 23, 2006

Release #06-125

SCDCA Media Contact: Public Information and Education Division

1.800.922.1594 (toll free in SC)

803.734.4190 or 803.734.4296

Email: scdca@dca.state.sc.us

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

HALLOWEEN ALERT:

IT IS ILLEGAL TO SELL CONTACT LENSES WITHOUT A PRESCRIPTION IN SOUTH CAROLINA

Columbia, SC... ...The South Carolina Department of Consumer Affairs is issuing a warning regarding the sale of decorative/cosmetic lenses without a prescription through our new publication **Fast Facts for Teens: Cosmetic Contact Lenses** . The warning comes with Halloween just around the corner as kids and adults are putting the final touches on their costumes. These final touches often include colored or cosmetic contact lenses, one of the fastest growing segments in the U.S. contact lens industry. Currently, over 3 million Americans wear cosmetic contact lenses. These accessories, however, pose serious health risks that range from swelling and infection to blindness and eye loss.

The Law:

In South Carolina, it is illegal to sell contact lenses without a valid contact lens prescription from a licensed optometrist or ophthalmologist. Consumers should know that health complications are also associated as a result from contact lenses not being fitted by a licensed eye care professional and properly maintained.

About the South Carolina Department of Consumer Affairs:

Established by the Consumer Protection code in 1974, The South Carolina Department of Consumer Affairs represents the interests of South Carolina Consumers.

Our mission is to protect consumers from inequities in the marketplace through advocacy, mediation, enforcement and education.

For more information, visit www.sccoconsumer.gov.

What You Should Know:

Decorative contact lenses do not provide corrective vision. Smokers are eight times more likely to develop corneal ulcers. HIV remains a potential concern because the virus has been isolated from contact lenses, corneal tissue and tears of patients with AIDS. Antihistamines, birth control pills, alcohol and air travel that tend to cause dryness in the eyes may increase the risk of infection from contact lenses.

What You Should Do:

Before getting cosmetic contact lenses, consumers should follow all precautions.

- Get an eye exam from a licensed professional.
- Obtain a prescription that includes the size, shape, power and brand of the lens. Many problems occur from cosmetic contact lenses that are too small and constrict the eyeball.
- Follow instructions for cleaning and wearing the lens.
- Schedule a follow-up appointment with your eye care professional.

Consumers can find out more information about cosmetic or colored contact lenses by viewing our new publication [Fast Facts for Teens: Cosmetic Contact Lenses](#) by contacting the Public Information & Education Division at 803.734.4190, toll-free at 1-800-922-1594 or online at www.sconsumer.gov.



About the South Carolina Department of Consumer Affairs:

Established by the Consumer Protection code in 1974, The South Carolina Department of Consumer Affairs represents the interests of South Carolina Consumers.

Our mission is to protect consumers from inequities in the marketplace through advocacy, mediation, enforcement and education.

For more information, visit www.sconsumer.gov.
