

Making *Contact*

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CooperVision

SEE BEYOND THE ORDINARY™

Staff perks for obtaining higher education, a primer on the latest contact lens designs and a script for answering a tough but common question from patients.

Perks for Taking Advantage Of Higher Education

There's no better time to increase your knowledge of vision care. Opportunities abound!

— By Sue Connelly, FCLSA, and Ursula Lotzkat

Lucky you! You're working in the ophthalmic profession during the most innovative and technologically advanced time. You have more opportunities than ever before to obtain the skills necessary to advance your career, improve your job performance, become more valuable to the practice and make a difference in patients' lives. Read on to find out what these educational opportunities are and how you can take advantage of them.

"Training and education optimize staff productivity," says Joan V. Murphy, paraoptometric section manager, American Optometric Association (AOA). Every year, thousands of optometric professionals attend Optometry's Meeting to network, learn and build their skills. The meeting provides access to more than 50 hours of continuing education courses in a variety of areas, such as contact lenses, spectacles, instrumentation and practice management. The paraoptometric section of AOA offers online courses, textbooks and CD modules so staff members can attain education without having to travel. The CD modules feature topics ranging from ocular anatomy and physiology to soft contact lens wear and care.

CooperVision also provides online education opportunities for ophthalmic professionals through the CooperVision Online Learning Center (<http://learning.coopervision.com>).

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You can choose from 23 courses, which include basic ocular anatomy, contact lenses, instrumentation, nomenclature, patient education and telephone technique. The courses are available at no charge to CooperVision account members.

According to Mark Bertolin, vice president of sales development and technology at CooperVision, "Informed employ-

Top 5 Web Sites Leading to Higher Education

- ABO-NCLE — (American Board of Opticianry-National Contact Lens Examiners) abo-ncle.org
- American Optometric Association, Paraoptometric Section aoa.org
- CLSA (Contact Lens Society of America) [clsainfo](http://clsainfo.org)
- CooperVision Online Learning Center, <http://learning.coopervision.com>
- JCAHPO (Joint Commission on Allied Health Personnel in Ophthalmology) jcahpo.org

ees create a staff that's better suited to address the diverse and complex needs of patients." When you complete a learning track, you will receive a certificate suitable for framing from CooperVision. You also can obtain National Contact Lens Examiners (NCLE) credits for most of the online courses through the CLSA University — the online learning resource of the Contact Lens Society of America (CLSA).

You have more opportunities than ever before to obtain the skills necessary to advance your career, improve your job performance, become more valuable to the practice and make a difference in patients' lives.

The CLSA is a volunteer organization focused on providing quality contact lens education. Its CLSA University offers 80 courses from introductory to advanced. The topics include soft and GP contact lens fitting, ocular anatomy, problem solving and practice management. The CLSA also conducts live educational courses and seminars, and publishes textbooks and manuals.

The Joint Commission on Allied Health Personnel in Ophthalmology (JCAHPO) hosts educational meetings throughout the year, including the Annual Continuing Education (ACE) program, which will be held this November in Atlanta. JCAHPO also offers online courses and educational CDs on a variety of contact lens topics. "Continuing education is essential for increasing professional skills, knowledge and

Perks for Taking Advantage Of Higher Education *(cont.)*



"Continuing education is essential for increasing professional skills, knowledge and office productivity. It enhances self-esteem ... and career satisfaction. Combined, these benefits create greater opportunities for the eyecare professional."

—Lynn D. Anderson, PhD

office productivity," says Lynn D. Anderson, PhD, executive director of JCAHPO. "It enhances self-esteem, self-confidence and career satisfaction. Combined, these benefits create greater opportunities for the eyecare professional, the practice and the doctor to succeed."

The American Board of Opticianry and National Contact Lens Examiners (ABO-NCLE) is gearing up for its first National Education Conference, Sept. 19-21, 2008, in Cincinnati. At the conference, ophthalmic professionals can attend seminars, participate in hands-on training and learn from experts in the fields of spectacle and contact lens dispensing. The Path to Certification Success program has been developed to help registrants prepare for the ABO or NCLE basic or advanced exams given during the meeting.

This is an exciting time in the eyecare field, and with all of the great educational opportunities at your disposal, you can be a vital part of it all. Lucky you! ■

Be 'In the Know' About the Latest Contact Lenses

Learning about the latest materials and designs will help you answer questions from patients.

Now you can offer more than a sympathetic ear when patients tell you they'd love to wear contact lenses but doubt there's a lens made specifically for them. Thanks to new lens designs, materials and modalities, there's never been a better time for patients with different eyecare needs to try contact lenses.

Until recently, dry eyes, presbyopia and certain sports and hobbies caused problems that sent patients back to their eyeglasses. No more. With many new products and designs available, now you can tell your patients they have several options that may address their eyecare needs. Here's an overview of the newest contact lens materials and designs.

Lenses for Dry Eyes

Patients with dry eyes often say their contact lenses cause discomfort and irritation. They complain about a burning sensation and a gritty feeling that may be due to an unstable tear film. "A healthy tear film is a complex system, and contact lenses can disrupt the system further and worsen dry eye symptoms — the main cause of contact lens dropout," explains B. W. Phillips, FCLSA, president of the Contact Lens Society of America, and manager of the Contact Lens Service at Duke University Eye Center in Durham, N.C.

The good news is that newer contact lens materials may benefit people with dry eyes, because the lenses retain moisture and resist a buildup of deposits, thereby promoting all-day comfort. "The contact



lens industry continues to design new materials, such as oxygen-permeable silicone hydrogel, to provide more comfort for dry eyes," says Terri Klein, COMT, FCLSA, of North Suburban Eye Specialists in Coon Rapids, Minn.

What's more, daily disposable lenses are now available to address a variety of conditions — even astigmatism. They don't require patients to use care products, which eliminate a potential source of dry eye irritation. "Because daily disposables don't require surface treatment and they're thrown away each day, they eliminate contact lens solution interaction and minimize the effects of lens deposits. The wettable surface increases patient comfort," says Trudy K. Grout, FCLSA, NCLC-AC, of the University of Iowa, department of ophthalmology and visual sciences contact lens clinic in Iowa City.

Discussing these materials with patients can encourage them to try contact lenses again. Once they've tried these new lenses, more than likely they'll be happy and keep wearing them, says Ann M. Hoscheit, OD, FAAO, owner of Summit Eye Associates in Gastonia, N.C. "It's important for staff to let patients know there has never been a better time to try contact lenses due to the new lens designs, materials and modalities."

CooperVision recently introduced Proclear 1 Day contact lenses

made from PC hydrogel, the only FDA-approved material that can claim it may provide improved comfort for contact lens wearers who experience mild discomfort or symptoms relating to dryness during lens wear. "Newer soft contact lens materials include silicone hydrogels, the Proclear family of lenses with PC Technology and Biofinity, the latest new material," Mr. Phillips says. "The Biofinity lens material is very breathable, which means that more oxygen flows through the lens," he adds. "The technology optimizes the relationship between oxygen and water for soft, flexible lenses. They're especially helpful for patients who want to wear contact lenses all day but complain about dryness symptoms."

Ms. Grout agrees: "Biofinity is a water-loving, high oxygen-transmission material that helps the lenses stay moist and comfortable. It's a healthy choice."

Latest Designs for Presbyopes

New options for patients with presbyopia combine comfortable materials with better designs. That's good news for patients who aren't thrilled with wearing reading glasses or bifocals.

"Almost everyone notices the effects of presbyopia after age 40," Ms. Klein says. "Monovision is an option, but it compromises depth perception. The new multifocal contact lenses, such as Proclear Multifocal, give presbyopes good near, intermediate and distance vision."

What's more, new toric multifocal contact lenses have been designed with comfort in mind for patients with astigmatism. Now there are lens powers available from +2.0D to -2.0D, adds up to +4D and cylinders up to 5.75D of astigmatism. "In the past, astigmatic presbyopes were limited in their options," Ms. Grout says. "Frequently, their only choices were gas-



permeable lenses, eyeglasses or settling for less-than-optimal vision. The new monthly-replacement, Proclear Multifocal Toric contact lens by CooperVision corrects presbyopia and astigmatism. Now patients can have clearer distance vision that wasn't possible with spherical bifocals. Astigmatic patients love the convenience, comfort and vision of this lens."



"There has never been a better time to be over 40. We have more contact lenses for presbyopic patients than ever before, from daily wear to extended wear, as well as a new option for emerging presbyopes."

—Ann M. Hoscheit, OD, FAO

Top 5 Reasons Why Patients Need to Toss Their Lenses as Recommended

When you suspect patients may be stretching the lifespan of their daily disposable lenses, give them these top 5 reasons why it's important to replace them as recommended:

- 1. Eye health.** You'll give your eyes a breather from wearing the same contact lenses over and over again. Protein and lipid deposits won't accumulate on your lenses and irritate your eyes.
- 2. Convenience.** You'll no longer have to adhere to a daily cleaning regimen, and you may eliminate the need for rewetting drops.
- 3. Flexibility.** You can wear contact lenses for sports or special occasions, and then just throw them away afterward.
- 4. No more solution sensitivity.** You won't have to use solutions to clean and store the lenses so solution sensitivity is never an issue.
- 5. Savings.** You'll save money because you won't have to buy cleaning solutions and cases to store your lenses.

CooperVision also has developed the first contact lens for patients with emerging presbyopia, called Biomedics EP. The lens is made with PC hydrogel material, which keeps eyes moist and comfortable.

Dr. Hoscheit is excited about the range of options. "There has never been a better time to be over 40," she says. "We have more contact lenses for presbyopic patients than ever before, from daily wear to extended wear, as well as a new option for emerging presbyopes."

Her staff finds many opportunities to discuss Biomedics EP lenses with patients — and you can, too. "Presbyopes with first-time complaints about near vision are good candidates for these lenses, regardless of whether or not they currently wear contact lenses," she explains. "When my staff and I query patients, we often encounter those who don't complain about emerging presbyopia because they're using over-the-counter readers. Now they have another option."

New Materials for Active Lifestyles

In addition to new materials designed to counter the effects of the aging eye, the latest daily disposables are available for patients with active lifestyles. These lenses are convenient, safe and easy to use. So they're ideal for patients who participate in water sports, hiking, cycling, camping and who travel frequently.

However, Dr. Hoscheit doesn't limit daily disposables to patients who participate in these activities. "We try to put all patients under age

18 into single-use lenses, so lens care compliance isn't an issue," she says. "And we recommend them for part-time contact lens wearers or folks who have comfort issues with contact lenses in general."

Another bonus: These lenses promote eye health, Ms. Klein says. "They're considered healthy because there's no day-to-day buildup of protein or lipid deposits, lowering the risks associated with overnight wear." The hydrogel material doesn't have the oxygen permeability of silicone hydrogel, but that isn't an issue because patients don't wear the lenses overnight.

CooperVision offers three daily disposable lenses: Proclear 1 Day, ClearSight 1 Day and ClearSight 1 Day Toric. Proclear 1 Day lenses use aspheric optics to reduce the effects of spherical aberration in low-light

conditions for sharper, crisper vision. They're a good choice for existing contact lens wearers who want more comfort and convenience.

ClearSight 1 Day lenses are a cost-effective option with a UV blocker that's ideal for sports and other outdoor activities.

"Because daily disposables are thrown away each day," says Ms. Grout, "they eliminate contact lens solution interaction and minimize the effects of lens deposits."

Like the contact lens options for dry eye patients and presbyopes, new daily disposable technologies provide more options for patients' eyecare needs. Now, more than ever before, you can discuss the many different lenses with patients, help them see better and feel more comfortable. ■

Q&A

An Answer to a Tough Question Patients Ask Every Day

Q: How Much Are Your Contact Lenses?

A: Callers and patients probably ask you this question every day. If you quickly give callers a few quotes, you encourage them to shop around for the lowest prices at other practices in the area. Also, you may relay the wrong information, since you're not sure what their eyecare needs are.

However, if you take this opportunity to give callers and patients a better understanding of what's important — vision care, quality and service — your answer could possibly turn callers into new patients and encourage current patients to try contact lenses.

Here's some advice on how to answer this common question from Sue Connelly, FCLSA, and Ursula Lotzkat, owners of Wink Productions Inc., a medical training consulting firm:

Follow a script. When a caller asks you how much contact lenses cost, say "That's a good question. Our contact lens professionals fit contact lenses for every type of vision correction, and they're competitively priced. I'd be happy to schedule an appointment for you to discuss the contact lens option that's best for you. Once they have all of the information, they can give you an exact price. We have an opening on Thursday at 12 noon. Does that work for you?"

Talk value, not numbers. If callers insist on a dollar amount, don't quote an exact number. Instead, give a range and explain that to quote an exact price, you must know specifically what his eyecare needs are, and that requires an exam. Always state everything that's included in the price, such as follow-up visits and exchanges, before you give a dollar range. This way, you continue to underscore value, rather than price.

Points to Remember

■ **Focus on the bigger picture.** Budgets are important, but price isn't the only aspect of vision care. The goal is to find the healthiest

4 Ways to Get People Off the Phone and Into the Office

As you know, people call the office with lots of questions. Take these steps to lure them off the phone and into the practice.

- 1. Invite your callers.** Eye health is too important to limit answering questions over the phone. Tell callers, "You're asking some great questions, and you deserve the best possible answers. Let's schedule a visit with one of our doctors so you can get those questions answered."
- 2. Be inquisitive.** Ask, "When was your last eye exam?" This question uncovers valuable information and reminds the caller that it's been 2 years — or maybe more.
- 3. Add some cheer.** Patients want to visit a friendly practice. Smile when you answer the phone, ask for the caller's name — and use it.
- 4. Go to 'Plan B.'** If callers don't want to schedule an appointment right away, suggest they visit your Web site or offer to mail them a newsletter, welcome packet or informational brochures.

contact lens for everyone. Let this idea govern your interactions with callers and patients.

■ **Keep your cool.** When callers or patients insist you give them a dollar amount, and you want to talk vision care, remain positive and adhere to your script.

■ **Make an appointment.** Patients want the opportunity to make an appointment, so give it to them. Even if they decline immediately, your office likely will be their top choice when they decide to give contact lenses a try. ■