

MINNESOTA BOARD OF OPTOMETRY

2829 University Avenue SE, Suite 550, Minneapolis, MN 55414
(651) 201-2762

Public Service – Safety Advisory

The Minnesota Board of Optometry (MBO) joins with the US Food and Drug Administration to alert consumers of risks associated with Non-Prescription Decorative Contact Lenses -Halloween inspired cosmetic contact lenses which can prove to be a health hazard.

MINNEAPOLIS: -- As consumers prepare for Halloween, the Minnesota Board of Optometry, <http://www.optometryboard.state.mn.us>, joins the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA), <http://www.fda.gov/ForConsumers/ConsumerUpdates/ucm275069.htm>, to caution against the use of non-corrective, decorative contact lenses sold without a prescription or proper fitting by a licensed eye care professional.

According to the FDA, improperly fitted and poor quality decorative contact lenses present a risk for blindness and other eye injury. The FDA reports that many places illegally sell decorative contact lenses without valid prescriptions and states that consumers should never buy lenses from unauthorized distributors such as street vendors, fair booths, flea markets, beauty supply stores or salons and tattoo parlors. Medical practitioners report an uptick in the number of patients being treated for damage to their eyes. Health hazards include scratched cornea, corneal infection, decreased vision and allergic reaction that can cause permanent loss of sight. Consumers are advised to contact MedWatch, the FDA voluntary reporting program at <http://www.fda.gov/Safety/MedWatch/HowToReport/default.htm> or by phone at 1-800-FDA-1088 to report a problem linked to the use of cosmetic contact lenses.

The Minnesota Board of Optometry, which licenses, regulates and disciplines 1,084 optometrists, recommends consumers follow these FDA tips when purchasing contact lenses.

- Get an eye exam from a licensed eye care practitioner
- Get a valid prescription from a licensed eye care practitioner
- Only buy contact lenses from a seller that requires a prescription
- Follow contact lens care instructions
- Seek medical attention if eyes are sore or red or a decrease in vision is noticed after use of contact lenses.
- Never share contact lenses

The FDA is responsible for protecting public health by assuring the safety, effectiveness, and security of human and veterinary drugs, vaccines and other biological products, medical devices, our nation's food supply, cosmetics, dietary supplements, and products that give off radiation.

The Minnesota Board of Optometry is one of 17 health regulatory boards in Minnesota with their mission

to ensure safe and competent patient care by licensing health professionals, enforcing standards of practice, and providing information to health care practitioners and the public. The board has statutory authority to require those selling illegal lens to cease and desist from that practice if a report is filed with the MBO by using a complaint form as found on their website.

Contact:

Randy Snyder, Executive Director
Minnesota Board of Optometry
651.201.2762
September 25, 2013