

New contact lens technology is easy on the eye

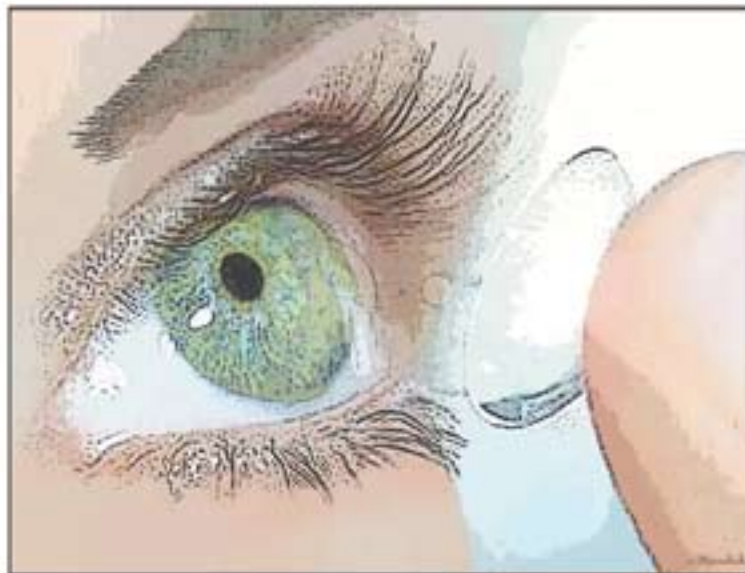
Contact lenses no longer have to be synonymous with discomfort. New technology offers gentler custom fits for every type of eye and vision problem.

Dr. Kimberly Benigno specializes in hard-to-fit contact lens patients and comprehensive eye exams. She pairs the best contact lens options with each patient's vision needs.

"New contacts made today are, literally, easier on the eye. There has been constant change and improvement in the technology," said Benigno, an optometrist at Eye Associates of the South – which has clinics in Biloxi, Ocean Springs and Gulfport. Benigno is a fellow of the American Academy of Optometry and a diplomate of the American Board of Optometry, a board certification.

There are countless options today for contacts wearers. "I want as many tools in my office as I can get. One brand may work for one patient and not another," Benigno said of using a wide variety of top brands.

Joe R. Mitchell, also an optometrist at Eye Associates of the South, pointed out that chil-



dren may start wearing contacts after age 10 or 12, depending upon whether the child is mature enough to take care of contacts and keep them clean.

If lenses have 1-day or dailies in their name, they should be disposed of after one day of use. Other popular options are monthly disposable contacts or two-week disposable contacts.

Many new lenses are ultra thin, for comfort, Mitchell

added. Some have various levels of UV-A and UV-B sun protection.

Benigno summarized the features offered by contacts now on the market:

- **The newest are water-gradient lenses** for patients with dry eye syndrome, allergies or who can't tolerate other contacts. The outer surface of these Dailies Total1 contacts is nearly 100% water, which makes it so com-

fortable that wearers say they feel "nothing" in their eyes, a study showed. "They are available at some doctors' clinics, but not to commercial retailers yet," Benigno said. "We've had them about six months. They are for nearsighted patients, but the lenses for farsighted patients will be on the market soon."

- **Silicon hydrogel soft lenses** for near or farsighted patients are designed for those who cannot tolerate other contacts, have dry eye or allergies. Technology mixes the wetting agent into these contacts to keep lenses wet. Brands include Acuvue Oasys HydraClear Plus and Air Optix.

- **Soft toric contacts** are recommended for most patients with astigmatism. Leading brands include Dailies Toric lenses, Biofinity Toric monthly lenses, Air Optix Toric monthly lenses, Acuvue Oasys Toric two-week disposable lenses, and Dailies Aqua Comfort Plus Toric lenses. Toric lenses offer near or farsighted correction.

- **RGP (rigid gas permeable) or "hard" contacts** are the best option for patients with extreme astigmatism, keratoconus, or corneal scarring, and for post-cornea transplant rehabilitation.

- **Multifocal contacts** may be soft or RGPs. Benigno often recommends Air Optix Multifocal lenses for these patients. Multifocal contacts offer near or farsighted correction and a bifocal.

- **Monovision contacts** offer different powers of lenses in each eye and may be the best option for older patients with astigmatism who need bifocals or strong bifocals. They include one contact for distance, and one for near vision.

- **Oversized lenses.** PK (penetrating keratoplasty) RGP contacts are slightly larger, 11 mm lenses, that are used for post-cornea transplant patients.

For information or an appointment, call Eye Associates of the South at (228) 396-5185 or visit www.2020view.com.