

## Lifewire: June is Home Safety Awareness Month

by Ven\_Griva

In an effort to educate Americans about everyday dangers they might encounter at home, the Home Safety Council has named the month of June as Home Safety Awareness Month.

The council is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to preventing the home-related injuries that each year are responsible for an average of 20,000 deaths and 21 million doctor's office and emergency-room visits.

"We hope to bring attention to the serious problem of preventable home injuries and its leading causes: falls, poisonings, fires and burns," said council President Meri-K Appy. "Just a few simple steps can dramatically reduce the dangers in most homes and may even make a lifesaving difference."

Throughout June, the Home Safety Council encourages the public to consider their home's danger areas and take the following steps to minimize their risk from potential injuries or death:

### FIRES AND BURNS

- Install smoke alarms on every level of your home and in or near all bedrooms. Test smoke alarm batteries at least once a month to ensure that they are working.
- Plan a home fire drill and practice it at least twice a year. Memorize the fire department's emergency telephone number.
- Use safety covers in electrical outlets and anti-scald devices in faucets in homes with young children.

### FALLS

- Make sure all porches, hallways and stairwells are well lit. Use the maximum safe wattage in light fixtures, which is usually posted inside light fixtures.

- Use a non-slip mat, or install non-slip strips or decals in bathtubs and showers.

- Install grab bars in bath and shower stalls.

## POISONINGS

- Keep medicines, household chemicals and cleaners out of the reach of children, preferably in locked cabinets.

- Install a carbon monoxide detector near sleeping areas in the home.

- Put your poison control center number (800-222-1222) near every phone.

The Home Safety Council is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization in Washington, D.C. More information regarding home safety - including posters and brochures - are available for free online from the Home Safety Resource Center at [www.homesafetycouncil.org](http://www.homesafetycouncil.org).

## VISION ALERT

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Food and Drug Administration in late May issued an alert to contact lens users about a rare but serious eye infection.

The infection is caused by *Acanthamoeba*, a common microscopic organism found in nature, which causes an infection called *Acanthamoeba keratitis*. This infection can cause permanent visual impairment or blindness. *Acanthamoeba keratitis* primarily affects otherwise healthy people, most of whom wear contact lenses.

Of the 138 cases culture-confirmed by the CDC, 21 of the patients reported having used Advanced Medical Optics Complete MoisturePlus Multi-Purpose Solution in the month prior to symptom onset. Out of the 37 patients for whom clinical data was available, nine failed medical therapy and required, or are expected, to undergo corneal transplant.

If you are using Advanced Medical Optics Complete MoisturePlus Multi-Purpose Solution, the CDC recommends:

- Stop using the product immediately and discard all remaining solution including partially used or unopened bottles.

- Choose an alternative contact lens solution.

- Discard current lens storage container.

- Discard current pair of soft lenses.

If you are experiencing signs of eye infections, such as eye pain, eye redness, blurred vision, sensitivity to light, sensation of something in the eye, or excessive tearing, it is recommended that you see an eye-care professional right away.

## EYE HEALTH

To protect from possible infection, the CDC recommends all contact lens users take the following preventive measures:

- See an eye-care professional for regular eye examinations.

- Wear and replace contact lenses according to the schedule prescribed by an eye-care professional.

- Remove contact lenses before any activity involving contact with water, including showering, using a hot tub, or swimming.

- Wash hands with soap and water and dry before handling contact lenses.

- Clean contact lenses according to the manufacturer's guidelines and instructions from an eye-care professional.
  
- Use fresh cleaning or disinfecting solution each time lenses are cleaned and stored. Never reuse or top off old solution.
  
- Never use saline solution and rewetting drops to disinfect lenses. Neither solution is an effective or approved disinfectant.
  
- Store reusable lenses in the proper storage case.
  
- Storage cases should be rinsed with sterile contact lens solution (never use tap water) and left open to dry after each use.
  
- Replace storage cases at least once every three months

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