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## **CONSUMER ALERT**

### **Doctors of Optometry Warn Public About Injuries Caused by Counterfeit Contact Lenses *Halloween Decorative Lenses Can Cause Permanent Injury***

**ATLANTA, GA. (October 2023)** – Georgia’s eye doctors are issuing a Consumer Alert to warn the public about dangers linked to wearing the counterfeit and fake contact lenses available for sale at gas stations, beauty supply shops, online and Halloween costume stores. Doctors of optometry say these decorative contact lenses – ones that are not prescribed or professionally fitted – can cause permanent injury, even blindness.

According to the members of the Georgia Optometric Association, in order to reduce the risk of eye injury it is important to purchase contact lenses only from an eye care professional and be fitted properly for the lenses. Consumers should follow instructions about cleaning, disinfecting and wearing the lenses, and never borrow lenses from a friend.

“According to federal law, all contact lenses are classified as a medical device by the Food & Drug Administration requiring a prescription to be bought or sold,” said Dr. Nacondus G. Gamble, president of the Georgia Optometric Association. “As a mom, I wouldn’t let my children put knockoff or imitation lenses in their eyes and, as an eye care professional, I would offer the same advice to Georgians everywhere.”

Doctors of optometry are warning the public that risks from use of these lens products can include:

- A cut or scratch on the top layer of the eyeball (corneal abrasion)
- Allergic reactions like itchy, watery red eyes
- Decreased vision
- Infection
- Blindness
- Lead Poisoning
- Difficulty removing them

Over-the-counter contact lenses of unknown origin may have been manufactured with lead in the color tint, bacteria in the saline or be made of substandard polymers.

Since 2005, federal law requires the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to regulate decorative lenses as medical devices, similar to corrective lenses. Federal law says it is illegal to sell the lenses over-the-counter without a prescription. According to the Georgia Optometric Association, it is a felony offense to sell contact lenses without a license in Georgia.

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*The Georgia Optometric Association is a statewide professional organization representing over 700 doctors of optometry serving communities throughout the state of Georgia. Founded in 1904, the GOA and its members work to provide the public with quality vision and eye care services. For more information visit [www.GOAeyes.com](http://www.GOAeyes.com),*

[www.Facebook.com/GeorgiaOptometricAssociation](http://www.Facebook.com/GeorgiaOptometricAssociation), [www.instagram.com/goaeyes/](http://www.instagram.com/goaeyes/) or follow us at [www.twitter.com/GOA\\_Eyes](http://www.twitter.com/GOA_Eyes).