

NEWS



NEW YORK STATE BOARD OF REGENTS

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STATE WARNS CONSUMERS OF DANGERS FROM COSMETIC CONTACT LENSES

The State Education Department's Office of the Professions warned consumers today that wearing cosmetic contact lenses without first having them prescribed and fitted by an authorized provider can pose serious health risks.

Cosmetic contact lenses are contacts that often change the color and may change the shape of the eye. Even if the lenses are not intended to improve vision, the consumer must be examined to ensure the lenses fit properly and do not damage the eye. The federal Food and Drug Administration has reported a number of risks associated with cosmetic contact lenses including conjunctivitis (an infection of the eye); corneal edema (swelling); allergic reaction; and corneal abrasion from poorly fitting lenses.

Associate Education Commissioner Frank Muñoz said, "Especially at this time of year – as Halloween fast approaches and adults and children begin to think about altering their appearance – it is important to remind and educate consumers about the health risks involved with wearing cosmetic contact lenses that have not been properly prescribed and fitted."

Illegal sales of cosmetic contact lenses have been discovered in gas stations, beauty salons, flea markets, and novelty shops. In addition, there are many Internet sites that sell these contact lenses.

Consumers can report the unlicensed sale of cosmetic contact lenses to the Office of Professional Discipline at 1-800-442-8106 or conduct@mail.nysed.gov.

Since 1891, the Board of Regents and the New York State Education Department have overseen the preparation, licensure, and practice of the professions. Currently, the Office of the Professions regulates forty-eight professions.