Contact Lens Complications:

**Keratitis:** This is an infection of the cornea, which is often due to poor compliance with contact lens hygiene and wear schedule. Bacteria invade the corneal tissue leading to areas of surface erosion and infiltration with white blood cells. This causes the eye to become significantly uncomfortable and light sensitive. These areas of erosion often lead to a sensation that there is something in the eye.

Treatment requires the discontinuation of contact lens wear until healing is complete. A topical antibiotic drop is used to alleviate the infection. In some cases a mild anti-inflammatory drop is used to reduce swelling and sensitivity. **Vision loss** is a risk if the infection leads to scarring of the cornea. The severity and duration of the infection determine this risk.

**Corneal Ulcer:** This is an infection of the deeper layers of the cornea. This serious infection must be treated aggressively to prevent **vision loss** from scarring and possible spread into the eye which could lead to blindness. These infections are usually very painful.

Treatment usually involves very frequent dosing of very strong antibiotic drop (usually around the clock for the first day). Patients cannot wear contact lenses for some time as the cornea heals. In some cases, it is not possible to return to contact lens wear. The pupil may be dilated by drops to help control pain.

**Corneal Hypoxia/Edema:** This is a condition due to wearing lenses beyond their replacement schedule or sleeping in lenses that are not approved for overnight wear. It is due to oxygen deprivation of the eye tissues. The symptoms of this condition are usually a very red painful eye that comes on suddenly, usually upon awaking with contact lenses in the eye. Upon examination no signs of infection are present.

Treatment is anti-inflammatory medications and the discontinuation of contact lenses for a period of time to allow the eye tissue to recover. In many cases, patients are unable to wear lenses for long periods of time after this type of injury. Sometimes it becomes necessary to discontinue contact lens wear completely as the eye can no longer tolerate any reduction in oxygen levels.

**Prevention:**

Follow cleaning protocols for your type of contact lenses as directed. Only sleep in lenses that are approved for overnight wear. Never exceed the wear schedule recommended by your eye doctor. Discontinue wear immediately if any irritation is noted and seek evaluation by your doctor. Have yearly contact lens evaluations to assess the continued appropriateness of your contact lenses to your eyes and lifestyle!

The UHC Vision Clinic is available to students, student's spouses/partners, faculty/staff, and dependents. It offers the full range of optometric care as well as a large retail inventory of frames and lenses. **Appointments are necessary and can be made online (students) or by phone. Call 706-542-5617 or visit [http://www.uhs.uga.edu/services/vision_clinic.html](http://www.uhs.uga.edu/services/vision_clinic.html)**