



# DEFECT & INVESTIGATION CENTRE



FOR ACTION BY:  
Chief Executive of each HSS Trust  
General Manager/Chief Executive of each HSS Board  
General Manager/Chief Executive of each Agency  
General Practitioners

Stoney Road Dundonald  
Belfast  
Northern Ireland BT16 1US

Telephone 01232 523745  
Facsimile 01232 523900  
GTN Code 440

## ADVICE NOTICE (NI) 99/02

Date: 5 July 1999

Product	:	USE OF TRIAL CONTACT LENSES ON MULTIPLE PATIENTS
Manufacturer/ Supplier	:	VARIOUS
Issue	:	RE-USE OF TRIAL CONTACT LENSES ON MULTIPLE PATIENTS
Action	:	DO NOT RE-USE CONTACT LENSES ISSUED TO PATIENTS FOR A TRIAL WEARING

**ADVICE NOTICE**

### 1. ATTENTION CHIEF EXECUTIVES/GENERAL MANAGERS

This Advice Notice should be brought to the immediate attention of all who need to know, or be aware of it including those listed below, in accordance with local procedures, and immediate action should be taken as detailed overleaf:

- ◆ Optometrists
- ◆ Ophthalmologists
- ◆ Dispensing Opticians
- ◆ All Medical and Nursing Staff in Hospitals and in the Community
- ◆ GPs
- ◆ Supplies Departments
- ◆ Risk Managers
- ◆ Safety Liaison Officers

Boards/Trusts should ensure that if appropriate, this information is passed to **ALL** persons having the responsibility for premises registered under "THE REGISTERED HOMES (NI) ORDER 1992".



HEALTH ESTATES  
ESTATE POLICY

An Executive Agency of the Department of Health  
and Social Services

## 2. IMMEDIATE ACTION

Do not re-use contact lenses issued to patients for a trial wearing.

## 3. BACKGROUND

At the request of the Department, the Spongiform Encephalopathy Advisory Committee (SEAC) considered the possible risk of transmission of variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (vCJD) through the re-use of trial contact lenses on subsequent patients. Scientific data relevant to the issue are limited. Any potential risk is probably very low, but the Committee felt strongly that the Department should encourage opticians to adopt, as a matter of best practice, the single use of trial lenses followed by safe disposal.

On 28 June a meeting was held between the Department and representatives of the optical and ophthalmic professions, the contact lens industry and SEAC. All present accepted that contact lenses issued to patients for a trial wearing should not be re-used. Departmental officials will be discussing with the General Optical Council how best to ensure full compliance with this decision.

The meeting also considered the question of the possible risks posed by the re-use of special complex diagnostic lenses and other instruments used in ophthalmology departments and optical practices which come in contact with the eye. These had not been considered by SEAC. It was agreed to seek the views of SEAC on the risks involved in these cases and to recommend that in the meantime such devices and instruments should continue to be used.

The Advisory Committee on Dangerous Pathogens (ACDP) and SEAC have published guidance on infection control of CJD and related disorders in healthcare settings. The document titled *Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathy Agents: Safe Working and the Prevention of Infection* is available in full text on <http://www.official-documents.co.uk> or from The Stationery Office.

## 4. ENQUIRIES

Enquiries *in writing* regarding this notice should be addressed as follows:

NORTHERN IRELAND DEFECT & INVESTIGATION CENTRE (NIDIC)  
Health Estates  
Estate Policy  
Stoney Road  
Dundonald  
BELFAST BT16 1US      *marked for the attention of Mr Dominic Cafolla*

Yours faithfully

Dominic Cafolla  
Deputising Defect Centre Manager

### HOW TO REPORT DEFECTS

Professional Estate Letter PEL(93)36 issued by Estate Services Directorate, on 27th July 1994 advises Health and Social Services Boards, HSS Trusts and agencies how to notify HPSS about accidents with and defects in medicinal products, buildings and plant, medical devices and other medical and non medical equipment and supplies.