Contact: [Dr. Name]

**Smoking, Vaping and Your Eyes: What You Need to Know**

*Smoke is eye irritant, especially for contact lens wearers*

**LOCATION (DATE)**—Smoking damages nearly every organ in your body, including your eyes. [Dr. Name/Practice Name] urges consumers not to use tobacco or e-cigarettes, as smoking can cause harm to eye health.

“Smoke is a major eye irritant, particularly for those who wear contact lenses,” said [Dr. Name]. “If you smoke and wear contact lenses, the tar and nicotine that deposits on your fingers can contaminate your contacts when you handle your lenses, which can give your eyes a burning sensation.”

In addition to experiencing problems associated with poor contact lens hygiene, plus the diseases already associated with tobacco use (lung cancer, emphysema, heart disease, high blood pressure, stroke and overall reduced life expectancy), individuals who use tobacco are more likely to develop eye diseases such as cataracts and macular degeneration.

People considering other alternatives, such as smokeless tobacco, or electronic cigarettes, may erroneously believe they are less risk. But there is no safe way to use tobacco, said [Dr. Name]. “Smokeless tobacco also carries a greater risk of developing gum disease, mouth cancer, and staining your teeth. While there may be some debate on the safety of e-cigs and vaping, they contain nicotine, which is highly addictive.”

E-cigs can cause harm to the developing brains of children under 18 and could cause harm to a fetus. In addition, some e-cigs contain diacetyl which is a flavor similar to butter and used on microwave popcorn. This chemical can cause ‘popcorn lung disease,’ which can cause shortness of breath, coughing and is irreversible. There is also little evidence that e-cigs are helpful in quitting tobacco use.

If you smoke and wear contact lenses, be sure to follow these recommendations from [Dr. Name]:

* Always wash and dry your hands before handling contact lenses.
* Carefully and regularly clean contact lenses. Rub the contact lenses with fingers and rinse thoroughly before soaking lenses overnight in sufficient multi-purpose solution to completely cover the lens.
* Store lenses in the proper lens storage case and replace your case every three months or sooner. Clean the case after each use, and keep it open and dry between cleanings.
* Only fresh solution should be used to clean and store contact lenses. Never re-use old solution. Saline solution and rewetting drops are not designed to disinfect lenses.
* Always follow the recommended contact lens replacement schedule prescribed by your eye doctor.
* Don’t wear contact lenses while swimming or in a hot tub. Lenses should not be exposed to any kind of water, including tap water and in swimming pools, oceans, lakes, hot tubs and showers.

To ensure your eyes are healthy, make an appointment with [Dr. Name/Practice Name] for a comprehensive eye exam at [website or phone number here.]

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***[About your practice]***