Your contact lenses are a convenient and comfortable way to enjoy clear sight. But have you ever wondered about the best way to dispose of your lenses and their packaging? Disposed of improperly, those handy little lenses can have a big negative impact on the world around us.

To help keep your vision AND our planet healthy, here are some important tips.

■ Never flush lenses down the sink or toilet.

■ There are recycling programs available especially for contact lenses and their packaging. Check out TerraCycle.com to find out how you can recycle your contact lenses, blister packs through the ONE by ONE recycling program.

■ Even though contact lenses, and the blister packs and top foils they come in are made with recyclable materials, they are too small to be recycled through standard recycling bins. Recycle these materials through TerraCycle.com. You can also check their website to see if there is a participating recycling center near you.

■ While contact lenses, blister packs and top foils need to go through TerraCycle to be properly recycled, cardboard contact lens packaging (i.e. boxes), contact lens cases and cleaning solution bottles can be recycled through standard recycling bins.

■ Contact lens cases should be replaced regularly for hygienic reasons, but they can be repurposed in many creative ways.

■ And of course, don’t forget to thoroughly wash and dry your hands before handling your contact lenses to protect your eyes and your precious sight. Only use a contact lens disinfecting solution—never water or saliva—to clean contact lenses each time they are removed.

Did you know:*  
■ 45 million people in the U.S. wear contact lenses  
■ 15 to 20 percent of contact wearers flush lenses down the sink or toilet  
■ An estimated 6 - 10 metric tons of plastic lenses end up in wastewater in the U.S. each year  
■ In wastewater treatment, contact lenses likely breakdown to form microplastics  
■ Microplastics pose a risk to aquatic organisms, marine animals, and eventually the entire food supply

* Source: Biodesign Institute Center for Environmental Health Engineering at Arizona State University (ASU), presented to American Chemical Society, August 2018.