

Doctor reports Berks case of fungal eye infection

The patient's condition may be linked to a contact lens solution, the Wyomissing physician says.

By Steven Henshaw
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The first known Berks County case of the fungal infection *Fusarium keratitis* was confirmed Thursday, according to the ophthalmologist treating the man.

Dr. Jonathan D. Primack, a corneal specialist with Eye Consultants of Pennsylvania, Wyomissing, said the patient, a middle-aged man whom he would not identify, likely will need a cornea transplant.

Primack said the patient has no apparent risk factors for

Fusarium other than using Bausch & Lomb's ReNu with MoistureLoc cleaning solution for his contact lenses.

ReNu with MoistureLoc is the same solution used by nearly all the contact wearers who have recently contracted the infection.

"Although the ReNu solution hasn't been proven to be the culprit, it is overwhelming what

these patient had in common," Primack said.

Doctors and optometrists at Eye Consultants and other eye care practices in Berks said they are advising patients who call with concerns to use a different brand of solution until health authorities learn more about what is causing the increase in infections.

Fungal infections such as *Fusarium* are rare in the Northeast, and are difficult to treat, Primack said. He said antibiotics are useless against fungal infections.

"Any contact wearer who has redness and pain in their eye should immediately stop wearing them and see their eye care provider," Primack said.

The main risk factor for the infection is contact lens use. Fusarian is not transmitted from person to person.

Other risk factors include people who do not practice good contact-lens hygiene and those with weak immune systems.

Berks eye care centers said they have not been overwhelmed by calls from patients inquiring about possible problems associated with contact use.

Primack said contact wearers should not hesitate to call their eye care specialist if they have redness or pain in their eyes, especially if they have been using the ReNu solution.

If the problem persists, they should seek the care of a corneal specialist, he said.

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