

ELIMINATING WASTE 1 CONTACT LENS AT A TIME

BAUSCH + LOMB
ONE by **ONE**
RECYCLING PROGRAM



A small change in your contact lens practice can reap unexpected rewards.

BY BRAD OATNEY, OD

I think most eye care professionals would agree, daily disposable lenses are a healthy option for their contact lens patients. And if you were to ask patients what type of contact lens offers the most enjoyable wearing experience, I think many would say it's a daily disposable.

What many of us might not know is that some patients resist wearing daily disposable contact lenses because of the waste associated with them. After 31 years in practice, I admit I was skeptical about this, until I heard directly from my patients how strongly they feel about generating nonrecyclable waste.

REMOVING THAT BARRIER

People appreciate the benefits of daily disposable contact lenses, but the downside for many is that they would be discarding 365 pairs of lenses every year, along with the foils and plastic packaging. I've actually had patients opt for monthly lenses instead of daily disposables because they'd heard contact lenses and packaging weren't recyclable and they couldn't justify putting that much waste in a landfill.

That's no longer the case, however, thanks to a collaboration between Bausch + Lomb and TerraCycle, an



Figure 1. Through the ONE by ONE Recycling Program, used contact lenses and packaging materials are collected either at eye care practices or by individual patients at home.

innovative company dedicated to “eliminating the idea of waste” by recycling hard-to-recycle items.

Through the ONE by ONE Recycling Program, used contact lenses and packaging materials are collected either at eye care practices or by individual patients at home and sent, postage-paid, to TerraCycle, where they're processed into raw material for the manufacture of new recycled products (Figure 1). What impresses me even more about Bausch + Lomb as a company is that they not only recycle their own products, but they also accept materials manufactured

by any contact lens company, which I think is quite generous.

And the story just keeps getting better. For every 10 pounds of material it receives from the ONE by ONE Recycling Program, TerraCycle donates \$10 to Optometry Giving Sight, an organization that funds programs aimed at providing eye examinations and low-cost eyeglasses to children and adults in need. Bausch + Lomb, in collaboration with TerraCycle, also recently donated custom training modules made from recycled material, including contact lens materials collected through the ONE by ONE Recycling Program, to the Guide Dog Foundation in Smithtown, NY.

GETTING STARTED

Participating in the ONE by ONE Recycling Program is as easy as creating a free account with TerraCycle and then visiting the “Bausch recycles in office” page to join the program. There, you can order containers and posters and download free shipping labels.

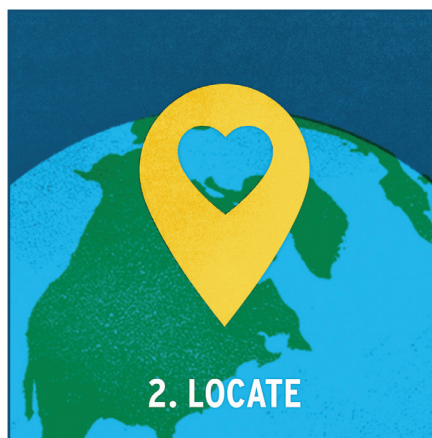
Educating patients about the program has been simple. We placed the recycling containers in strategic locations in our office, and I make it a point to use them myself and point them out to my patients. When someone tries a new contact lens, for



Figure 2. One year's worth of daily disposable contact lens waste from one patient.

instance, and then looks for a trash can to discard the packaging, I explain that we can now recycle those materials along with the contact lenses. I encourage patients to save their used lenses, blister packs, and foils at home and bring them to the office at their next visit.

Making one small change to a daily habit—discarding contact lenses and packaging in a recycling container instead of a trash can—can divert hundreds of pounds of waste from landfills (Figure 2). It's a low ask with a huge upside. In just 4 years, over 5,500 optometrists have joined the ONE by ONE Recycling Program, helping to collect nearly 27 million used contact lens items. That's nearly 162,000



pounds of waste that has been diverted from landfills and water streams.

MULTILEVEL REWARDS

The ONE by ONE Recycling Program has caught on rapidly in my practice. The level of interest among my patients is growing much faster than I anticipated. Patients appreciate that not only am I offering them what I believe are the best contact lenses for their eyes, but I'm also committed to making sure the materials left over can be recycled. I really believe this removes a psychologi-



cal barrier to wearing daily disposable contact lenses for many patients.

As the daily disposable modality continues to grow, Bausch + Lomb has shown leadership and forethought regarding how we can be good stewards of our Earth. ■

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In 2020, the ONE by ONE Recycling Program was recognized by the Business Intelligence Group as their Sustainability Leadership Award winner and The Stevie Awards as the Environmental Campaign of the Year.