

# Where'd you get those eyes? A look at the newest lens trends

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Staff Writer

Today's scientists have finally found a way to foil mother nature. Thanks to them, you can completely change the color of your eyes. Well... almost.

Tinted contact lenses can brighten natural eye color or even completely cover eye color to give you the baby blues you always wanted.

Since they were introduced to the public in 1983, tinted contacts have sold well to style-conscious people who were bored with their glasses or contacts — and also to those who didn't need corrective lenses.

"I ask my patients if they would be interested in trying some (tinted lenses), but 50 percent say, 'No, I'm satisfied with the color my eyes are now,'" said Dr. Barry Adler, a Chapel Hill optometrist specializing in contact lenses.

"Then, I ask them if they are curious to see what the lenses would look like," Adler said. "After they try them, 75 percent say they like the results."

Tinted lenses were originally designed so that wearers could find them more easily if they accidentally dropped them.

Visitint, the light tinting used on those contact lenses, is used only on prescription lenses because the color is not visible when placed on the eye.

The first cosmetically tinted contact lenses approved by the U.S. Food

## Health Focus

and Drug Administration were developed by CTL, Inc., in Research Triangle Park.

Today, six major eye-care companies offer lines of tinted contacts, and each line is slightly different in design and shade.

All of the cosmetically tinted lenses are soft. These are the most comfortable and popular lenses on the market today.

They are available for daily and extended wear. Daily-wear lenses must be removed and cleaned every night; extended-wear lenses can be worn for as long as a week at a time.

Some contact lens wearers can have their old lenses custom-tinted at specially equipped laboratories.

The first cosmetically tinted lenses were designed to enhance a person's natural eye color. Light blue and green eyes could be changed to almost any color, but darker eye colors could not be hidden by these lenses.

Today, even the darkest brown eyes can be changed to look baby blue, emerald green, aqua or hazel.

Wesley-Jessen, a major manufacturer of eye care products, developed the patented process that applies dots of color to the lens in a matrix pattern to form an opaque lens.

The opaque lens can totally change any eye color, but it also allows some

of the natural color to come through, creating a natural look.

Adler said the opaque lenses are popular among people with brown eyes, while the enhancing lenses are still the most popular choice among those with blue, green or gray eyes.

The color-enhancing lenses are available in two styles. One type is designed with a doughnut-shaped ring of color on the lens that has a clear opening over the pupil. The other style has a solid disc of color which covers the pupil.

Adler said the color over the pupil does not affect vision and is "barely detectable."

The FDA regulates the number of colors that can be used to tint contact lenses, but manufacturers can vary the amount of color used on the lens to produce many different shades.

Tinted contacts are available in shades of green from spring green to hazel, a variety of blues from turquoise to sky blue and in combinations such as aqua, violet blue, royal blue and amber.

Manufacturers are using sex appeal to lure new customers to the tinted contact lens market.

In July, Wesley-Jessen began a \$5 million advertising campaign for its DuraSoft 3 Colors contact lenses. The ads say the lenses are for vision correction "or just for fun."

The new hazel opaque lenses being advertised are very popular among women with dark complexions,

especially blacks and Hispanics, Adler said.

Adler said the tinted contact lenses are not as popular in Chapel Hill as he thought they would be.

"I think they're more popular in metropolitan areas where people are more fashion-conscious," he said.

Adler said that the biggest problems associated with the tinted contacts are regular cleaning and maintenance.

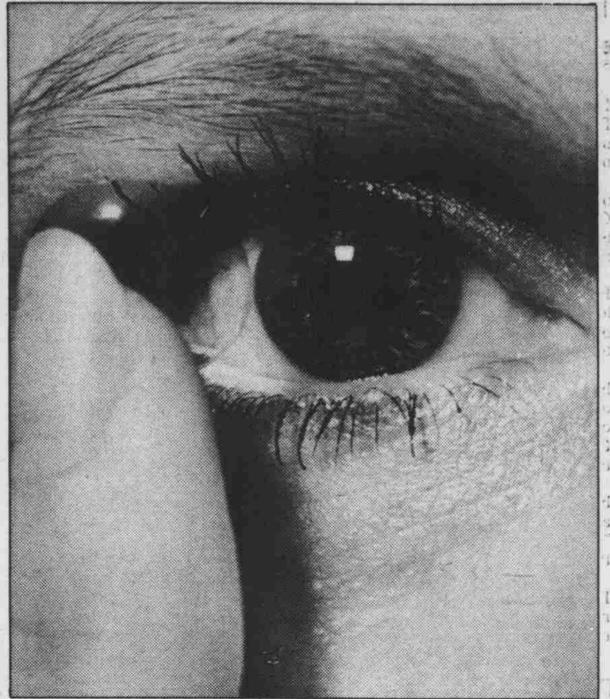
"Even if the contacts are not prescription, you still need to have regular eye exams because you still have something in your eye," Adler said. "You're still susceptible to all the problems associated with contacts."

Tinted lenses have therapeutic as well as cosmetic value.

The opaque lenses have changed the lives of many people who suffered from cosmetic abnormalities of the eyes. The lenses can conceal damaged irises, two different-colored irises and pink-colored irises associated with albinism.

The soft tinted lenses can also be used to correct astigmatism, a vision problem caused by a nonuniform curvature of the cornea or lens.

In the Chapel Hill area, the enhancing lenses cost \$40 each. An opaque lens costs around \$75. The additional cost of professional services for consultation, fitting and checkups varies.



Brenda Hinson holds a tinted lens at an ophthalmology clinic

DTH/Charlotte Cannon

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## Democrats

ership in education should set the tone for improvements.

Biden advocated visiting state capitals to make the case for educational programs and ensuring healthy drug-free children.

"I would spend as much time talking about education as this president has spent talking about Star Wars," he said.

Babbitt emphasized parental involvement at an early age and supported HeadStart, an early education program for disadvantaged children.

All of the Democratic candidates agreed that schools need to attract more teachers, especially minorities, by raising teacher salaries. But they were divided on whether teacher salaries should be based on performance.

Gephardt said effective methods of evaluating teacher performance don't exist now and must be developed. Babbitt called for competency testing of teachers before raising salaries. Jackson wanted "combat pay" for teachers in the dangerous inner-city school districts.

Tuition tax credits, a proposal to give tax breaks to parents whose children attend private schools, were opposed by Biden, Gephardt and

Gore. Simon said the amount of money involved was negligible.

If tuition tax credits were implemented, Biden said, "public schools would become second class."

But federal aid to colleges with high tuition should not be used as a club to force them to lower tuition, Dukakis said. Instead state and local governments should work with the schools to lower tuition rates. Gore considered withholding federal aid only as a last resort, and noted that most aid goes directly to the student and not to a particular college.

Babbitt advocated scholarships for public service-oriented jobs, while Biden called for a system providing loans for education at any point in a lifetime with a repayment schedule based on the borrower's income.

The candidates' educational priorities ranged from improving teacher prestige to increasing educational spending.

In his inaugural address, Gephardt said he would set a goal to make Americans the best educated people in the world by the year 2000.

Restoring a sense of prestige to teaching and increasing teaching salaries would be a priority, Biden said.

Gore said he would tell Secretary of Education William Bennett to "clean out his desk," and then appoint a teacher to the position.

Simon called for a deeper commitment to education rather than an election year speech. He said he was disappointed that preschool education, adult illiteracy and educational aid to the handicapped were not discussed in the forum.

During the last half hour of the forum, Judy Woodruff, chief Washington correspondent for the "MacNeil/Lehrer NewsHour," and Edward Fiske, education editor for The New York Times, questioned the candidates about stands taken by the National Education Association, the largest teachers' union in the country.

Gephardt disagreed with the NEA's opposition of the 1986 tax reform bill. He also supports merit pay for teachers only after evaluation methods are researched. The NEA believes evaluation methods are suitable and merit pay should be implemented immediately.

The NEA opposed the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings Act to balance the budget because it fears money for

education will be decreased. But Simon said he favors the act because money for education could come from other areas.

Gore and Biden both called for a longer school year, and Biden also called for a flexible school year allowing families a choice in scheduling school vacations for their children. The NEA is opposed to both proposals.

Most of the candidates said they were concerned with the deficit, but education came first.

Cutting defense spending and increasing revenue through excise taxes would allow a \$30 to \$35 million reduction in the deficit without hurting education, Biden said.

Simon said a long-range approach would provide the greatest monetary return. Since high school drop-outs make less money than graduates on the average, educational programs to lower the drop-out rate would increase revenue in the long run.

Dukakis said the deficit would force hard choices on spending, but money could be saved by emphasizing education as a state responsibility.

In order to improve education programs nationwide while placing the responsibility for education on the states, Dukakis said state governors should work with the president to form their own educational programs.

But Biden said federal funds could be used to coerce states to comply with presidential programs. He said the president could visit state legislatures to influence their policies.

Presidential leadership could also be applied to setting a national policy on the way acquired immune deficiency syndrome is handled in the schools.

Gore said he would follow the example of British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher in launching a nationwide AIDS education campaign to allay fears that AIDS can be spread through casual contact. Gore did not favor segregating AIDS-infected children in the schools.

Jackson supported expanding AIDS research and education with no spending limit.

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