ALL ABOUT VISION

10 Tips for Getting the Best Price on Contact Lenses

- Evaluate all your options, including optical stores, mass merchants, Internet sites and your eye doctor. Don't automatically assume that any one of these will be cheaper.

- Don't assume that any seller who is less expensive for a particular lens will be less expensive for all lenses.

- Ask about rebates. And no matter where you buy, visit the lens manufacturer's website to see if a rebate is being offered that the seller didn't tell you about.

- Check your health insurance plan to see if you have vision benefits that get you a better price.

- Do the math when you order online. Websites might be deceptive when totaling your order and might hide shipping or handling charges.

- Avoid shipping costs by ordering larger quantities.

- Don't buy online at the last minute. Standard shipping is often free, but expedited delivery usually will cost you extra.

- Add up the intangibles. After a head-to-head comparison of lens prices, look at things like shipping (for online purchases), gasoline (if you're making a special trip to a brick-and-mortar store), and the value of your time.

- Focus on value. Price is only one component; also consider availability, convenience, customer service, and bundled products and services.

- Read the small print on ads and coupons. Sometimes a minimum purchase is required to qualify for discounts, and shipping and handling fees might increase your overall cost.

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