

Make Contact

GET AN EYE EXAM anywhere in the country, and federal law requires the examining doctor to give you your eyeglass prescription for the asking. That way, you can shop around for the best deal on frames and lenses. But ask for a contact-lens prescription and you can wind up empty-handed.

That's because the law in many states doesn't require doctors to give it to you. Optometry groups say they fear people with access to contact-lens prescriptions could skip follow-up care needed by, say, first-time wearers. Yet many of the nation's 34 million contact-lens users are longtime wearers who experience no eye trouble. They could possibly save hundreds of dollars if they were able to comparison-shop.

Currently, 27 states require the release of a contact-lens prescription. Eye doctors in the other 23 might give it out, so always ask. For the best prices, comparison-shop at discount chains and online merchants. Check the company's return or replacement policy, should the lenses be defective or uncomfortable. And look for the expiration date on the package. If there's a problem with your lenses, be sure to go in and consult with your eye doctor. — *Consumer Reports*

rd.com For a list of the 27 states that require eye-care providers to release contact-lens prescriptions, click on *In This Issue* at rd.com.

