

Method for Applying Stable Coating on Silicone Hydrogel Contact Lenses

The present invention generally relates to a method for producing silicone hydrogel contact lenses having a stable coating thereon involving a coating step carried out in a cost-effective and time-efficient manner. In addition, the present invention provides silicone hydrogel contact lenses produced according to the method of the invention.

BACKGROUND

Soft silicone hydrogel contact lenses are increasingly becoming popular because of their high oxygen permeability and comfort. But, a silicone hydrogel material typically has a surface, or at least some areas of its surface, which is hydrophobic (non-wettable) and susceptible to adsorbing lipids or proteins from the ocular environment and may adhere to the eye. Thus, a silicone hydrogel contact lens will generally require a surface modification.

A known approach for modifying the hydrophilicity of a relatively hydrophobic contact lens material is through the use of a plasma treatment, for example, commercial lenses such as Focus NIGHT & DAY™ and O2OPTIX™ (CIBA VISION), and PUREVISION™ (Bausch & Lomb) utilize this approach in their production processes. Advantages of a plasma coating, such as, e.g., those may be found with Focus NIGHT & DAY™, are its durability, relatively high hydrophilicity/wettability, and low susceptibility to lipid and protein deposition and adsorption. But, plasma treatment of silicone hydrogel contact lenses may not be cost effective, because the preformed contact lenses must typically be dried before plasma treatment and because of relative high capital investment associated with plasma treatment equipment.

Various other approaches are proposed and/or used for modifying the surface hydrophilicity of a silicone hydrogel contact lens. Examples of such approaches include: incorporation of wetting agents (hydrophilic polymers) into a lens formulation for making the silicone hydrogel contact lens (see, e.g., U.S. Pat. Nos. 6,367,929, 6,822,016, 7,052,131, and 7,249,848); a layer-by-layer (LbL) polyionic material deposition technique (see, e.g., U.S. Pat. Nos. 6,451,871; 6,719,929; 6,793,973; 6,884,457; 6,896,926; 6,926,965; 6,940,580; and 7,297,725, and U.S. Pat. Appl. Pub. Nos. 2007/0229758A1; 2008/0174035A1 and 2008/0152800A1); crosslinking of LbL coatings on contact lenses has been proposed in commonly-owned copending US pat. Appl. pub. Nos. 2008/0226922 A1 and 2009/0186229 A1; and attachment of hydrophilic polymers onto contact lenses according to various mechanisms (see for example, US Pat. No. 6,099,122, 6,436,481, 6,440,571, 6,447,920, 6,465,056, 6,521,352, 6,586,038, 6,623,747, 6,730,366, 6,734,321, 6,835,410, 6,878,399, 6,923,978, 6,440,571, and 6,500,481, US Pat. Appl. Pub. Nos. 2009/0145086 A1, 2009/0145091A1, 2008/0142038A1, and 2007/0122540A1). Although those techniques can be used in rendering a silicone hydrogel material wettable, there are some shortcomings in

those techniques. For example, wetting agents may impart haziness to the resultant lenses because of their incompatibility with other silicone components in the lens formulation and may not provide a durable hydrophilic surface for extended wear purposes. LbL coatings may not be as durable as plasma coatings and may have relatively high densities of surface charges; which may interfere with contact lens cleaning and disinfecting solutions. Crosslinked LbL coatings may have a hydrophilicity and/or wettability inferior than original LbL coatings (prior to crosslinking) and still have relative high densities of surface charges. In addition, they may not be cost-effective and/or time-efficient for implementation in a mass production environment, because they typically require relatively long time and/or involve laborious, multiple steps to obtain a hydrophilic coating.

Recently, a new cost-effective approach has been described in U.S. pat. Appl. pub. No. 2012/0026457 A1 (herein incorporated by reference in its entirety) for applying a non-silicone hydrogel coating onto a silicone hydrogel contact lens, in which an organic solvent-based coating solution is involved in forming a stable, interpenetrating base coating on a silicone hydrogel contact lens and then a partially-crosslinked hydrophilic polymeric material are covalently attached onto the base coating of a silicone hydrogel contact lens directly in a lens package during autoclave. Although this new approach can provide silicone hydrogel contact lenses with durable hydrophilic coatings thereon, it may not be environmentally friendly coating process because it involves use of organic solvent in the coating process.

Therefore, there is still a need for new coating of forming a stable base coating on a silicone hydrogel contact lens in an environmentally-friendly manner.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The invention, in one aspect, provides a method for producing silicone hydrogel contact lenses each having a crosslinked hydrophilic coating thereon, the method of invention comprising the steps of: (a) obtaining a silicone hydrogel contact lens from a polymerizable composition comprising at least one siloxane-containing vinylic monomer or macromer and from about 30% to about 60% by weight of N-vinylpyrrolidone relative to the total amount of polymerizable components; and (b) contacting the silicone hydrogel contact lens with an aqueous solution of a homo- or copolymer of acrylic acid or C₁-C₃ alkylacrylic acid to form a base coating on the silicone hydrogel contact lens, wherein the base coating exhibits a water-break-up-time (WBUT) of about 20 seconds or more after the silicone hydrogel contact lens has been autoclaved at 115°C to 125°C in a phosphate buffered saline having a pH from about 6.5 to about 7.5 for about 30 minutes.

In another aspect, the invention provides a silicone hydrogel contact lens obtained according to a method of the invention, wherein the silicone hydrogel contact lens has an oxygen permeability of at least about 40 barrers, a surface wettability characterized by a

water contact angle of about 100 degrees or less, and a coating durability characterized by surviving a digital rubbing test.

These and other aspects of the invention will become apparent from the following description of the presently preferred embodiments. The detailed description is merely illustrative of the invention and does not limit the scope of the invention, which is defined by the appended claims and equivalents thereof. As would be obvious to one skilled in the art, many variations and modifications of the invention may be effected without departing from the spirit and scope of the novel concepts of the disclosure.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF EMBODIMENTS OF THE INVENTION

Unless defined otherwise, all technical and scientific terms used herein have the same meaning as commonly understood by one of ordinary skill in the art to which this invention belongs. Generally, the nomenclature used herein and the laboratory procedures are well known and commonly employed in the art. Conventional methods are used for these procedures, such as those provided in the art and various general references. Where a term is provided in the singular, the inventors also contemplate the plural of that term. The nomenclature used herein and the laboratory procedures described below are those well-known and commonly employed in the art.

“Contact Lens” refers to a structure that can be placed on or within a wearer's eye. A contact lens can correct, improve, or alter a user's eyesight, but that need not be the case. A contact lens can be of any appropriate material known in the art or later developed, and can be a soft lens (e.g., hydrogel or silicone lens), a hard lens, or a hybrid lens. A “silicone hydrogel contact lens” refers to a contact lens comprising a silicone hydrogel bulk (core) material.

A “hydrogel” or “hydrogel material” refers to a crosslinked polymeric material which is insoluble in water, but can hold at least 10 percent by weight of water in its three-dimensional polymer networks (i.e., polymer matrix) when it is fully hydrated.

A “silicone hydrogel” refers to a silicone-containing hydrogel obtained by copolymerization of a polymerizable composition comprising at least one silicone-containing monomer or at least one silicone-containing macromer or at least one crosslinkable silicone-containing prepolymer.

As used in this application, the term “non-silicone hydrogel” refers to a hydrogel that is theoretically free of silicon.

“Hydrophilic,” as used herein, describes a material or portion thereof that will more readily associate with water than with lipids.

A “vinyl monomer” refers to a compound that has one sole ethylenically unsaturated

group, is soluble in a solvent, and can be polymerized actinically or thermally.

The term “soluble”, in reference to a compound or material in a solvent, means that the compound or material can be dissolved in the solvent to give a solution with a concentration of at least about 0.5% by weight at room temperature (i.e., a temperature of about 22°C to about 28°C).

The term “insoluble”, in reference to a compound or material in a solvent, means that the compound or material can be dissolved in the solvent to give a solution with a concentration of less than 0.005% by weight at room temperature (as defined above).

As used in this application, the term “ethylenically unsaturated group” is employed herein in a broad sense and is intended to encompass any groups containing at least one $>C=C<$ group. Exemplary ethylenically unsaturated groups include without limitation (meth)acryloyl ($-\overset{\text{O}}{\underset{\text{||}}{\text{C}}}-\overset{\text{CH}_3}{\text{C}}=\text{CH}_2$ and/or $-\overset{\text{O}}{\underset{\text{||}}{\text{C}}}-\text{CH}=\text{CH}_2$), allyl, vinyl, styrenyl, or other $C=C$ containing groups.

The term “(meth)acrylamide” refers to methacrylamide and/or acrylamide.

The term “(meth)acrylate” refers to methacrylate and/or acrylate.

As used herein, “actinically” in reference to curing, crosslinking or polymerizing of a polymerizable composition, a prepolymer or a material means that the curing (e.g., crosslinked and/or polymerized) is performed by actinic irradiation, such as, for example, UV/visible irradiation, ionizing radiation (e.g. gamma ray or X-ray irradiation), microwave irradiation, and the like. Thermal curing or actinic curing methods are well-known to a person skilled in the art.

A “hydrophilic vinylic monomer”, as used herein, refers to a vinylic monomer which as a homopolymer typically yields a polymer that is water-soluble or can absorb at least 10 percent by weight of water.

A “hydrophobic vinylic monomer”, as used herein, refers to a vinylic monomer which as a homopolymer typically yields a polymer that is insoluble in water and can absorb less than 10 percent by weight of water.

A “macromer” or “prepolymer” refers to a compound or polymer that contains ethylenically unsaturated groups and has an average molecular weight of greater than 700 Daltons.

As used in this application, the term “crosslinker” refers to a compound having at least two ethylenically unsaturated groups. A “crosslinking agent” refers to a crosslinker having a molecular weight of 700 Daltons or less.

As used in this application, the term “polymer” means a material formed by polymerizing/crosslinking one or more monomers or macromers or prepolymers or combinations thereof.

As used in this application, the term “molecular weight” of a polymeric material (including monomeric or macromeric materials) refers to the weight-average molecular weight unless otherwise specifically noted or unless testing conditions indicate otherwise.

A “polysiloxane” refers to a compound containing a polysiloxane segment of

$$\begin{array}{c} R_1' \\ | \\ -Si-O- \left[\begin{array}{c} R_3' \\ | \\ Si-O- \end{array} \right]_{m1} \left[\begin{array}{c} R_5' \\ | \\ Si-O- \end{array} \right]_{m2} \begin{array}{c} R_7' \\ | \\ Si- \end{array} \\ | \\ R_2' \quad | \quad R_4' \quad | \quad R_6' \quad | \quad R_8' \end{array}$$
 in which m1 and m2 independently of each other are an integer of from 0 to 500 and (m1+m2) is from 2 to 500, R₁′, R₂′, R₃′, R₄′, R₅′, R₆′, R₇′, and R₈′ independently of one another, are C₁-C₁₀ alkyl, C₁-C₄ alkyl- or C₁-C₄- alkoxy-substituted phenyl, C₁-C₁₀ fluoroalkyl, C₁-C₁₀ fluoroether, C₆-C₁₈ aryl radical, -alk-(OC₂H₄)_{m3}-OR′ (in which alk is C₁-C₆ alkyl diradical, R′ is H or C₁-C₄ alkyl and m3 is an integer from 1 to 10), or a linear hydrophilic polymer chain.

A “polycarbosiloxane” refers to a compound containing a polycarbosiloxane segment

$$\begin{array}{c} R_1'' \\ | \\ -Si- \left[\begin{array}{c} R_3'' \\ | \\ O-Si-CH_2- \end{array} \right]_{n1} \left[\begin{array}{c} R_5'' \\ | \\ Si- \end{array} \right]_{n2} \\ | \\ R_2'' \quad | \quad R_4'' \quad | \quad R_6'' \end{array}$$
 of in which n1 is an integer of 2 or 3, n2 is an integer of from 2 to 100 (preferably from 2 to 20, more preferably from 2 to 10, even more preferably from 2 to 6), R₁′′, R₂′′, R₃′′, R₄′′, R₅′′, and R₆′′ independent of one another are a C₁-C₆ alkyl radical (preferably methyl).

The term “fluid” as used herein indicates that a material is capable of flowing like a liquid.

The term “alkyl” refers to a monovalent radical obtained by removing a hydrogen atom from a linear or branched alkane compound. An alkyl group (radical) forms one bond with one other group in an organic compound.

The term “alkylene divalent group” or “alkylene diradical” or “alkyl diradical” interchangeably refers to a divalent radical obtained by removing one hydrogen atom from an alkyl. An alkylene divalent group forms two bonds with other groups in an organic compound.

The term “alkyl triradical” refers to a trivalent radical obtained by removing two hydrogen atoms from an alkyl. An alkyl triradical forms three bonds with other groups in an organic compound.

The term “alkoxy” or “alkoxyl” refers to a monovalent radical obtained by removing the hydrogen atom from the hydroxyl group of a linear or branched alkyl alcohol. An alkoxy group (radical) forms one bond with one other group in an organic compound.

In this application, the term “substituted” in reference to an alkyl diradical or an alkyl radical means that the alkyl diradical or the alkyl radical comprises at least one substituent which replaces one hydrogen atom of the alkyl diradical or the alkyl radical and is selected from the group consisting of hydroxy (-OH), carboxy (-COOH), -NH₂, sulfhydryl (-SH), C₁-C₄

alkyl, C₁-C₄ alkoxy, C₁-C₄ alkylthio (alkyl sulfide), C₁-C₄ acylamino, C₁-C₄ alkylamino, di-C₁-C₄ alkylamino, halogen atom (Br or Cl), and combinations thereof.

In this application, an “oxazoline” refers to a compound of  in which: R¹ is hydrogen, methyl, ethyl, N-pyrrolidonylmethyl, N-pyrrolidonylethyl, N-pyrrolidonylpropyl, or a monovalent radical of –alk–(OC₂H₄)_{m3}–OR” in which alk is C₁-C₄ alkyl diradical; R” is C₁-C₄ alkyl (preferably methyl); and m3 is an integer from 1 to 10 (preferably 1 to 5).

In this application, the term “polyoxazoline” refers to a linear polymer which is obtained in a ring-opening polymerization of one or more oxazolines and generally has a formula of
$$\text{T}_1 \left[\begin{array}{c} \text{N}-\text{CH}_2\text{CH}_2 \\ | \\ \text{O} \diagup \text{R}^1 \end{array} \right]_x \text{T}_2$$
 in which: T1 and T2 are two terminal groups; R¹ is hydrogen, methyl, ethyl, N-pyrrolidonylmethyl, N-pyrrolidonylethyl, N-pyrrolidonylpropyl, or a monovalent radical of –alk–(OC₂H₄)_{m3}–OR” in which alk is C₁-C₄ alkyl diradical; R” is C₁-C₄ alkyl (preferably methyl); m3 is an integer from 1 to 10 (preferably 1 to 5); x is an integer from 5 to 500. A polyoxazoline segment has a divalent polymer chain of a formula of
$$\left[\begin{array}{c} \text{N}-\text{CH}_2\text{CH}_2 \\ | \\ \text{O} \diagup \text{R}^1 \end{array} \right]_x$$
 in which R¹ and x are as defined above.

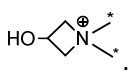
In this application, the term “poly(2-oxazoline-co-ethyleneimine)” refers to a statistical copolymer having a formula of
$$\text{T}_1 \left[\begin{array}{c} \text{N}-\text{CH}_2\text{CH}_2 \\ | \\ \text{O} \diagup \text{R}^1 \end{array} \right]_{x-z} \text{stat} \left[\begin{array}{c} \text{NH}-\text{CH}_2\text{CH}_2 \\ | \\ \text{N} \end{array} \right]_z \text{T}_2$$
 in which: T1 and T2 are terminal groups; R¹ is hydrogen, methyl, ethyl, N-pyrrolidonylmethyl, N-pyrrolidonylethyl, N-pyrrolidonylpropyl, or a monovalent radical of –alk–(OC₂H₄)_{m3}–OR” in which alk is C₁-C₄ alkyl diradical; R” is C₁-C₄ alkyl (preferably methyl); m3 is an integer from 1 to 10 (preferably 1 to 5); x is an integer from 5 to 500; z is an integer equal to or less than x. A poly(2-oxazoline-co-ethyleneimine) is obtained by hydrolyzing a polyoxazoline.

In this application, the term “poly(2-oxazoline-co-ethyleneimine)-epichlorohydrin” refers to a polymer obtained by reacting a poly(2-oxazoline-co-ethyleneimine) with epichlorohydrin to convert all or substantial percentage (≥90%) of the secondary amine groups of the poly(2-oxazoline-co-ethyleneimine) into azetidinium groups. Examples of poly(2-oxazoline-co-ethyleneimine)-epichlorohydrin are disclosed in a copending US patent application No. 62/041,762 filed 26 August 2014 (herein incorporated by reference in its entirety).

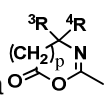
An “epichlorohydrin-functionalized polyamine” or “epichlorohydrin-functionalized polyamidoamine” refers to a polymer obtained by reacting a polyamine or polyamidoamine with epichlorohydrin to convert all or a substantial percentage of the secondary amine groups of the polyamine or polyamidoamine into azetidinium groups.

The term “polyamidoamine-epichlorohydrin” refers to an epichlorohydrin-functionalized adipic acid-diethylenetriamine copolymer.

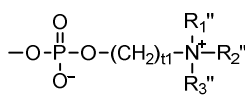
In this application the term “azetidinium” or “3-hydroxyazetidinium” refers to a

positively-charged, divalent radical (or group or moiety) of .

The term “thermally-crosslinkable” in reference to a polymeric material or a functional group means that the polymeric material or the functional group can undergo a crosslinking (or coupling) reaction with another material or functional group at a relatively-elevated temperature (from about 40°C to about 140°C), whereas the polymeric material or functional group cannot undergo the same crosslinking reaction (or coupling reaction) with another material or functional group at room temperature (i.e., from about 22°C to about 28°C, preferably from about 24°C to about 26°C, in particular at about 25°C) to an extend detectable for a period of about one hour.

The term “azlactone” refers to a mono-valent radical of formula  in which p is 0 or 1; ³R and ⁴R independently of each other is C₁-C₈ alkyl (preferably methyl).

As used in this application, the term “phosphorylcholine” refers to a monovalent

zwitterionic group of  in which t1 is an integer of 1 to 5 and R₁'', R₂'', and R₃'', independently of one another are C₁-C₈ alkyl or C₁-C₈ hydroxyalkyl.

As used in this application, the term “reactive vinylic monomer” refers to any vinylic monomer having at least one reactive functional group selected from the group consisting of carboxyl group, primary amino group, and secondary amino group.

As used in this application, the term “non-reactive vinylic monomer” refers to any vinylic monomer (either hydrophilic or hydrophobic vinylic monomer) free of carboxyl group, primary amino group, secondary amino group, epoxide group, isocyanate group, azlactone group, or aziridine group. A non-reactive vinylic monomer can include a hydroxyl group or a tertiary or quaternium amino group.

A free radical initiator can be either a photoinitiator or a thermal initiator. A “photoinitiator” refers to a chemical that initiates free radical crosslinking/polymerizing reaction by the use of light. A “thermal initiator” refers to a chemical that initiates radical crosslinking/polymerizing reaction by the use of heat energy.

A “spatial limitation of actinic radiation” refers to an act or process in which energy radiation in the form of rays is directed by, for example, a mask or screen or combinations thereof, to impinge, in a spatially restricted manner, onto an area having a well defined peripheral boundary. A spatial limitation of UV radiation is obtained by using a mask or screen having a radiation (e.g., UV) permeable region, a radiation (e.g., UV) impermeable region surrounding the radiation-permeable region, and a projection contour which is the

boundary between the radiation-impermeable and radiation-permeable regions, as schematically illustrated in the drawings of U.S. Patent Nos. 6,800,225 (Figs. 1-11), and 6,627,124 (Figs. 1-9), 7,384,590 (Figs. 1-6), and 7,387,759 (Figs. 1-6), all of which are incorporated by reference in their entireties. The mask or screen allows to spatially project a beam of radiation (e.g., UV radiation) having a cross-sectional profile defined by the projection contour of the mask or screen. The projected beam of radiation (e.g., UV radiation) limits radiation (e.g., UV radiation) impinging on a lens formulation located in the path of the projected beam from the first molding surface to the second molding surface of a mold. The resultant contact lens comprises an anterior surface defined by the first molding surface, an opposite posterior surface defined by the second molding surface, and a lens edge defined by the sectional profile of the projected UV beam (i.e., a spatial limitation of radiation). The radiation used for the crosslinking is radiation energy, especially UV radiation, gamma radiation, electron radiation or thermal radiation, the radiation energy preferably being in the form of a substantially parallel beam in order on the one hand to achieve good restriction and on the other hand efficient use of the energy.

A “water contact angle” refers to an average water contact angle (i.e., contact angles measured by Sessile Drop method) at the room temperature, which is obtained by averaging measurements of contact angles with at least 3 individual contact lenses.

The term “intactness” in reference to a coating on a silicone hydrogel contact lens is intended to describe the extent to which the contact lens can be stained by Sudan Black in a Sudan Black staining test described in Example 1. Good intactness of the coating on a silicone hydrogel contact lens means that there is practically no Sudan Black staining of the contact lens.

The term “durability” in reference to a coating on a silicone hydrogel contact lens is intended to describe that the coating on the silicone hydrogel contact lens can survive a digital rubbing test.

As used herein, “surviving a digital rubbing test” or “surviving a durability test” in reference to a coating on a contact lens means that after digitally rubbing the lens according to a procedure described in Example 1, water contact angle on the digitally rubbed lens is still about 100 degrees or less, preferably about 90 degrees or less, more preferably about 80 degrees or less, most preferably about 70 degrees or less.

The intrinsic “oxygen permeability”, Dk , of a material is the rate at which oxygen will pass through a material. As used in this application, the term “oxygen permeability (Dk)” in reference to a hydrogel (silicone or non-silicone) or a contact lens means a measured oxygen permeability (Dk) which is corrected for the surface resistance to oxygen flux caused by the boundary layer effect according to the procedures described in Example 1 of 2012/0026457 A1 (herein incorporated by reference in its entirety). Oxygen permeability is

conventionally expressed in units of barrers, where “barrer” is defined as $[(\text{cm}^3 \text{ oxygen})(\text{mm}) / (\text{cm}^2)(\text{sec})(\text{mm Hg})] \times 10^{-10}$.

The “oxygen transmissibility”, Dk/t , of a lens or material is the rate at which oxygen will pass through a specific lens or material with an average thickness of t [in units of mm] over the area being measured. Oxygen transmissibility is conventionally expressed in units of barrers/mm, where “barrers/mm” is defined as $[(\text{cm}^3 \text{ oxygen}) / (\text{cm}^2)(\text{sec})(\text{mm Hg})] \times 10^{-9}$.

The “ion permeability” through a lens correlates with the Ionoflux Diffusion Coefficient. The Ionoflux Diffusion Coefficient, D (in units of $[\text{mm}^2/\text{min}]$), is determined by applying Fick’s law as follows:

$$D = - n' / (A \times dc/dx)$$

where n' = rate of ion transport $[\text{mol}/\text{min}]$; A = area of lens exposed $[\text{mm}^2]$; dc = concentration difference $[\text{mol}/\text{L}]$; dx = thickness of lens $[\text{mm}]$.

“Ophthalmically compatible”, as used herein, refers to a material or surface of a material which may be in intimate contact with the ocular environment for an extended period of time without significantly damaging the ocular environment and without significant user discomfort.

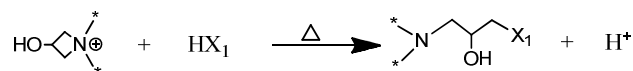
The term “ophthalmically safe” with respect to a packaging solution for sterilizing and storing contact lenses is meant that a contact lens stored in the solution is safe for direct placement on the eye without rinsing after autoclave and that the solution is safe and sufficiently comfortable for daily contact with the eye via a contact lens. An ophthalmically-safe packaging solution after autoclave has a tonicity and a pH that are compatible with the eye and is substantially free of ocularly irritating or ocularly cytotoxic materials according to international ISO standards and U.S. FDA regulations.

The term “modulus” or “elastic modulus” in reference to a contact lens or a material means the tensile modulus or Young’s modulus which is a measure of the stiffness of a contact lens or a material. The modulus can be measured using a method in accordance with ANSI Z80.20 standard. A person skilled in the art knows well how to determine the elastic modulus of a silicone hydrogel material or a contact lens. For example, all commercial contact lenses have reported values of elastic modulus.

An “organic-based solution” refers to a solution which is a homogeneous mixture consisting of an organic-based solvent and one or more solutes dissolved in the organic based solvent. An organic-based coating solution refers to an organic-based solution containing at least one polymeric coating material as a solute in the solution.

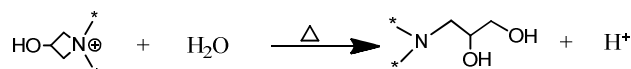
An “organic-based solvent” is intended to describe a solvent system which consists of one or more organic solvents and optionally about 40% or less, preferably about 30% or less, more preferably about 20% or less, even more preferably about 10% or less, in particular about 5% or less by weight of water relative to the weight of the solvent system.

The invention is generally related to a method for producing silicone hydrogel contact lenses with a non-silicone hydrogel coating thereon, which comprises a water-based coating process (step) for forming a relatively-stable base coating. This invention is partly based on the discovery that by incorporating an adequate amount (e.g., from about 30% to about 60%, preferably from about 35% to about 56%, more preferably from about 40% to about 52% by weight) of N-vinylpyrrolidone into a silicone hydrogel lens formulation for forming silicone hydrogel contact lenses, a relatively-stable base coating can be formed on such resultant silicone hydrogel contact lenses from an aqueous solution of a homo- or copolymer of acrylic acid or C₁-C₃ alkylacrylic acid. It is believed that by incorporating an adequate amount (e.g., from about 30% to about 60%, preferably from about 35% to about 56%, more preferably from about 40% to about 52% by weight) of N-vinylpyrrolidone into a silicone hydrogel lens formulation for forming silicone hydrogel contact lenses, the polymer matrix of resultant silicone hydrogel contact lenses may contain polyvinylpyrrolidone (PVP) segments which can form strong interpolymer complexes with a homo- or copolymer of acrylic acid or C₁-C₃ alkylacrylic acid in aqueous solution. Such resultant interpolymer complexes can be stable so as to survive in a lens packaging solution having a neutral pH (from about 6.5 to 7.5) during autoclave. With such stable base coating formed in a water-based coating process, a durable non-silicone hydrogel coating on the silicone hydrogel contact lens can be formed by covalently attaching a partially-crosslinked hydrophilic polymeric material according to thermally-induced reaction mechanism involving an azetidinium group and a carboxyl, primary amino or secondary amino group as shown below:



Scheme I

in which X₁ is -S-*, -OC(=O)-*, or -NR'-* in which R' is hydrogen, a C₁-C₂₀ unsubstituted or substituted, linear or branched alkyl group; * represents an organic radical. Such a reaction can be carried out conveniently and directly in a lens package during autoclave (i.e., heating the lens package with the lens in a packaging solution about 115°C to about 125°C for approximately 20-40 minutes under pressure) which is a commonly-used sterilization process in the contact lens industry. Any azetidinium groups which are not reacted with carboxyl, primary amino or secondary amino groups will be hydrolyzed during autoclave as shown below



Scheme II

The invention, in one aspect, provides a method for producing silicone hydrogel contact lenses each having a crosslinked hydrophilic coating thereon, the method of invention comprising the steps of: (a) obtaining a silicone hydrogel contact lens from a

polymerizable composition comprising at least one silicone-containing vinylic monomer or macromer and from about 30% to about 60%, preferably from about 35% to about 56%, more preferably from about 40% to about 52% by weight of N-vinylpyrrolidone relative to the total amount of polymerizable components; and (b) contacting the silicone hydrogel contact lens with an aqueous solution of a homo- or copolymer of acrylic acid or C₁-C₃ alkylacrylic acid to form a base coating on the silicone hydrogel contact lens, wherein the base coating exhibits a water-break-up-time (WBUT) of about 20 seconds or more after the silicone hydrogel contact lens has been autoclaved at 115°C to 125°C in a phosphate buffered saline having a pH from about 6.5 to about 7.5 for about 30 minutes. Preferably, a method of the invention further comprises a step of covalently attaching and crosslinking a water-soluble, thermally-crosslinkable hydrophilic polymeric material having azetidinium groups onto the base coating to form a non-silicone hydrogel coating on the silicone hydrogel contact lens. More preferably, the step of covalently attaching and crosslinking is carried out directly in a sealed lens package containing a packaging solution including the water-soluble, thermally crosslinkable hydrophilic polymeric material during sterilization by autoclave at a temperature from about 115°C to about 125°C for at least about 20 minutes, thereby forming a non-silicone hydrogel coating on the silicone hydrogel contact lens.

A person skilled in the art knows very well how to make silicone hydrogel (SiHy) contact lenses. For example, SiHy contact lenses can be produced in a conventional "spin-casting mold," as described for example in U.S. Patent No. 3,408,429, or by the full cast-molding process in a static form, as described in U.S. Patent Nos. 4,347,198; 5,508,317; 5,583,463; 5,789,464; and 5,849,810, or by lathe cutting of silicone hydrogel buttons as used in making customized contact lenses. In cast-molding, a lens formulation typically is dispensed into molds and cured (i.e., polymerized and/or crosslinked) in molds for making contact lenses. For production of silicone hydrogel (SiHy) contact lenses, a SiHy lens-forming composition (or SiHy lens formulation) for cast-molding or spin-cast molding or for making SiHy rods used in lathe-cutting of contact lenses generally comprises at least one components selected from the group consisting of a silicone-containing vinylic monomer, a silicone-containing vinylic macromer, a silicone-containing prepolymer, a hydrophilic vinylic monomer, a hydrophobic vinylic monomer, a crosslinking agent (a compound having a molecular weight of about 700 Daltons or less and containing at least two ethylenically unsaturated groups), a free-radical initiator (photoinitiator or thermal initiator), a hydrophilic vinylic macromer/prepolymer, and combination thereof, as well known to a person skilled in the art. A SiHy contact lens formulation can also comprise other necessary components known to a person skilled in the art, such as, for example, a UV-absorbing agent (i.e., UV-absorbing vinylic monomers), a visibility tinting agent (e.g., dyes, pigments, or mixtures thereof), antimicrobial agents (e.g., preferably silver nanoparticles), a bioactive agent,

leachable lubricants, leachable tear-stabilizing agents, and mixtures thereof, as known to a person skilled in the art. Resultant SiHy contact lenses then can be subjected to extraction with an extraction solvent to remove unpolymerized components from the resultant lenses and to hydration process, as known by a person skilled in the art. In addition, a preformed SiHy contact lens can be a colored contact lens (i.e., a SiHy contact lens having at least one colored patterns printed thereon as well known to a person skilled in the art).

Any suitable silicone-containing vinylic monomers can be used in the invention. Examples of preferred silicone-containing vinylic monomers include without limitation N-[tris(trimethylsiloxy)silylpropyl]-(meth)acrylamide, N-[tris(dimethylpropylsiloxy)-silylpropyl]-(meth)acrylamide, N-[tris(dimethylphenylsiloxy)silylpropyl] (meth)acrylamide, N-[tris(dimethylethylsiloxy)silylpropyl] (meth)acrylamide, N-(2-hydroxy-3-(3-(bis(trimethylsilyloxy)methylsilyl)propyloxy)propyl)-2-methyl acrylamide; N-(2-hydroxy-3-(3-(bis(trimethylsilyloxy)methylsilyl)propyloxy)propyl) acrylamide; N,N-bis[2-hydroxy-3-(3-(bis(trimethylsilyloxy)methylsilyl)propyloxy)propyl]-2-methyl acrylamide; N,N-bis[2-hydroxy-3-(3-(bis(trimethylsilyloxy)methylsilyl)propyloxy)propyl] acrylamide; N-(2-hydroxy-3-(3-(tris(trimethylsilyloxy)silyl)propyloxy)propyl)-2-methyl acrylamide; N-(2-hydroxy-3-(3-(tris(trimethylsilyloxy)silyl)propyloxy)propyl)acrylamide; N,N-bis[2-hydroxy-3-(3-(tris(trimethylsilyloxy)silyl)propyloxy)propyl]-2-methyl acrylamide; N,N-bis[2-hydroxy-3-(3-(tris(trimethylsilyloxy)silyl)propyloxy)propyl]acrylamide; N-[2-hydroxy-3-(3-(t-butyltrimethylsilyl)propyloxy)propyl]-2-methyl acrylamide; N-[2-hydroxy-3-(3-(t-butyltrimethylsilyl)propyloxy)propyl]acrylamide; N,N-bis[2-hydroxy-3-(3-(t-butyltrimethylsilyl)propyloxy)propyl]-2-methyl acrylamide; N,N-bis[2-hydroxy-3-(3-(t-butyltrimethylsilyl)propyloxy)propyl]acrylamide; 3-methacryloxy propylpentamethyldisiloxane, tris(trimethylsilyloxy)silylpropyl methacrylate (TRIS), (3-methacryloxy-2-hydroxypropyloxy)propylbis(trimethylsiloxy)methylsilane, (3-methacryloxy-2-hydroxypropyloxy)propyltris(trimethylsiloxy)silane, 3-methacryloxy-2-(2-hydroxyethoxy)propyloxy)propylbis(trimethylsiloxy)methylsilane, N-2-methacryloxyethyl-O-(methyl-bis-trimethylsiloxy-3-propyl)silyl carbamate, 3-(trimethylsilyl)propylvinyl carbonate, 3-(vinylloxycarbonylthio)propyl-tris(trimethyl-siloxy)silane, 3-[tris(trimethylsiloxy)silyl]propylvinyl carbamate, 3-[tris(trimethylsiloxy)silyl] propyl allyl carbamate, 3-[tris(trimethylsiloxy)silyl]propyl vinyl carbonate, t-butyltrimethyl-siloxyethyl vinyl carbonate; trimethylsilylethyl vinyl carbonate, and trimethylsilylmethyl vinyl carbonate). Most preferred siloxane-containing (meth)acrylamide monomers of formula (1) are N-[tris(trimethylsiloxy)silylpropyl]acrylamide, TRIS, N-[2-hydroxy-3-(3-(t-butyltrimethylsilyl)propyloxy)propyl]acrylamide, or combinations thereof.

A class of preferred silicone-containing vinylic monomers is polycarbosiloxane vinylic monomers (or carbosiloxane vinylic monomers). Examples of such polycarbosiloxane vinylic

monomers or macromers are those described in US Patent Nos. 7915323 and 8420711, in US Patent Application Publication Nos. 2012/244088 and 2012/245249, and in copending US Patent Application Nos. 61/984,101 entitled "Carbosiloxane Vinylic Monomers" and 61/984,117 entitled "Hydrophilized Carbosiloxane Vinylic Monomers" (herein incorporated by references in their entireties).

A class of preferred silicone-containing vinylic monomers or macromers is polysiloxane-containing vinylic monomers or macromers. Examples of such polysiloxane-containing vinylic monomers or macromers are monomethacrylated or monoacrylated polydimethylsiloxanes of various molecular weight (e.g., mono-3-methacryloxypropyl terminated, mono-butyl terminated polydimethylsiloxane or mono-(3-methacryloxy-2-hydroxypropyloxy)propyl terminated, mono-butyl terminated polydimethylsiloxane); dimethacrylated or diacrylated polydimethylsiloxanes of various molecular weight; vinyl carbonate-terminated polydimethylsiloxanes; vinyl carbamate-terminated polydimethylsiloxane; vinyl terminated polydimethylsiloxanes of various molecular weight; methacrylamide-terminated polydimethylsiloxanes; acrylamide-terminated polydimethylsiloxanes; acrylate-terminated polydimethylsiloxanes; methacrylate-terminated polydimethylsiloxanes; bis-3-methacryloxy-2-hydroxypropyloxypropyl polydimethylsiloxane; N,N,N',N'-tetrakis(3-methacryloxy-2-hydroxypropyl)-alpha,omega-bis-3-aminopropyl-polydimethylsiloxane; polysiloxanylalkyl (meth)acrylic monomers; siloxane-containing macromer selected from the group consisting of Macromer A, Macromer B, Macromer C, and Macromer D described in US 5,760,100 (herein incorporated by reference in its entirety); the reaction products of glycidyl methacrylate with amino-functional polydimethylsiloxanes; hydroxyl-functionalized siloxane-containing vinylic monomers or macromers; polysiloxane-containing macromers disclosed in U.S. Patent Nos. 4,136,250, 4,153,641, 4,182,822, 4,189,546, 4,343,927, 4,254,248, 4,355,147, 4,276,402, 4,327,203, 4,341,889, 4,486,577, 4,543,398, 4,605,712, 4,661,575, 4,684,538, 4,703,097, 4,833,218, 4,837,289, 4,954,586, 4,954,587, 5,010,141, 5,034,461, 5,070,170, 5,079,319, 5,039,761, 5,346,946, 5,358,995, 5,387,632, 5,416,132, 5,451,617, 5,486,579, 5,962,548, 5,981,675, 6,039,913, and 6,762,264 (here incorporated by reference in their entireties); polysiloxane-containing macromers disclosed in U.S. Patent Nos. 4,259,467, 4,260,725, and 4,261,875 (herein incorporated by reference in their entireties). Di and triblock macromers consisting of polydimethylsiloxane and polyalkyleneoxides could also be of utility. For example, one might use methacrylate end capped polyethyleneoxide-block-polydimethylsiloxane-block-polyethyleneoxide to enhance oxygen permeability. Suitable monofunctional hydroxyl-functionalized siloxane-containing vinylic monomers/macromers and suitable multifunctional hydroxyl-functionalized siloxane-containing vinylic monomers/macromers are commercially available from Gelest, Inc, Morrisville, PA.

Another class of preferred silicone-containing vinylic macromers is silicon-containing prepolymers comprising hydrophilic segments and hydrophobic segments. Any suitable of silicone-containing prepolymers with hydrophilic segments and hydrophobic segments can be used in the invention. Examples of such silicone-containing prepolymers include those described in commonly-owned US Patent Nos. 6,039,913, 7,091,283, 7,268,189 and 7,238,750, 7,521,519; commonly-owned US patent application publication Nos. US 2008-0015315 A1, US 2008-0143958 A1, US 2008-0143003 A1, US 2008-0234457 A1, US 2008-0231798 A1, and commonly-owned US patent application Nos. 61/180,449 and 61/180,453; all of which are incorporated herein by references in their entireties.

In addition to N-vinylpyrrolidone, a lens formulation for making SiHy contact lenses of the invention can further comprise one or more hydrophilic vinylic monomers other than N-vinylpyrrolidone. Preferred examples of such hydrophilic vinylic monomers are N,N-dimethylacrylamide (DMA), N,N-dimethylmethacrylamide (DMMA), 2-acrylamidoglycolic acid, 3-acryloylamino-1-propanol, N-hydroxyethyl acrylamide, N-[tris(hydroxymethyl)methyl]-acrylamide, N-methyl-3-methylene-2-pyrrolidone, 1-ethyl-3-methylene-2-pyrrolidone, 1-methyl-5-methylene-2-pyrrolidone, 1-ethyl-5-methylene-2-pyrrolidone, 5-methyl-3-methylene-2-pyrrolidone, 5-ethyl-3-methylene-2-pyrrolidone, 1-n-propyl-3-methylene-2-pyrrolidone, 1-n-propyl-5-methylene-2-pyrrolidone, 1-isopropyl-3-methylene-2-pyrrolidone, 1-isopropyl-5-methylene-2-pyrrolidone, 1-n-butyl-3-methylene-2-pyrrolidone, 1-tert-butyl-3-methylene-2-pyrrolidone, 2-hydroxyethylmethacrylate (HEMA), 2-hydroxyethyl acrylate (HEA), hydroxypropyl acrylate, hydroxypropyl methacrylate (HPMA), trimethylammonium 2-hydroxy propylmethacrylate hydrochloride, aminopropyl methacrylate hydrochloride, dimethylaminoethyl methacrylate (DMAEMA), glycerol methacrylate (GMA), a C₁-C₄-alkoxy polyethylene glycol (meth)acrylate having a weight average molecular weight of up to 1500, methacrylic acid, N-vinyl formamide, N-vinyl acetamide, N-vinyl isopropylamide, N-vinyl-N-methyl acetamide, allyl alcohol, and mixtures thereof.

Examples of preferred hydrophobic vinylic monomers include methylacrylate, ethylacrylate, propylacrylate, isopropylacrylate, cyclohexylacrylate, 2-ethylhexylacrylate, methylmethacrylate, ethylmethacrylate, propylmethacrylate, vinyl acetate, vinyl propionate, vinyl butyrate, vinyl valerate, styrene, chloroprene, vinyl chloride, vinylidene chloride, acrylonitrile, 1-butene, butadiene, methacrylonitrile, vinyl toluene, vinyl ethyl ether, perfluorohexylethyl-thio-carbonyl-aminoethyl-methacrylate, isobornyl methacrylate, trifluoroethyl methacrylate, hexafluoro-isopropyl methacrylate, hexafluorobutyl methacrylate.

Examples of preferred cross-linking agents include without limitation tetraethyleneglycol diacrylate, triethyleneglycol diacrylate, diethyleneglycol diacrylate, ethyleneglycol diacrylate, tetraethyleneglycol dimethacrylate, triethyleneglycol dimethacrylate, diethyleneglycol dimethacrylate, ethyleneglycol dimethacrylate,

tetraethyleneglycol divinyl ether, triethyleneglycol divinyl ether, diethyleneglycol divinyl ether, ethyleneglycol divinyl ether, trimethylopropane trimethacrylate, pentaerythritol tetramethacrylate, bisphenol A dimethacrylate, vinyl methacrylate, ethylenediamine dimethacrylamide, ethylenediamine diacrylamide, glycerol dimethacrylate, triallyl isocyanurate, triallyl cyanurate, allylmethacrylate, allylacrylate, N-allyl-methacrylamide, N-allyl-acrylamide, 1,3-bis(methacrylamidopropyl)-1,1,3,3-tetrakis(trimethylsiloxy)disiloxane, N,N'-methylenebisacrylamide, N,N'-methylenebismethacrylamide, N,N'-ethylenebisacrylamide, N,N'-ethylenebismethacrylamide, 1,3-bis(N-methacrylamidopropyl)-1,1,3,3-tetrakis-(trimethylsiloxy)disiloxane, 1,3-bis(methacrylamidobutyl)-1,1,3,3-tetrakis(trimethylsiloxy)-disiloxane, 1,3-bis(acrylamidopropyl)-1,1,3,3-tetrakis(trimethylsiloxy)disiloxane, 1,3-bis(methacryloxyethylureidopropyl)-1,1,3,3-tetrakis(trimethylsiloxy)disiloxane, and combinations thereof. A preferred cross-linking agent is tetra(ethyleneglycol) diacrylate, tri(ethyleneglycol) diacrylate, ethyleneglycol diacrylate, di(ethyleneglycol) diacrylate, methylenebisacrylamide, triallyl isocyanurate, or triallyl cyanurate. The amount of a cross-linking agent used is expressed in the weight content with respect to the total polymer and is preferably in the range from about 0.05% to about 3%, and more preferably in the range from about 0.1% to about 2%.

Examples of hydrophilic prepolymers with multiple acryloyl or methacryloyl groups include, but are not limited to, a water-soluble crosslinkable poly(vinyl alcohol) prepolymer described in U.S. Patent Nos. 5,583,163 and 6,303,687; a water-soluble vinyl group-terminated polyurethane prepolymer described in U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2004/0082680; derivatives of a polyvinyl alcohol, polyethyleneimine or polyvinylamine, which are disclosed in U.S. Patent No. 5,849,841; a water-soluble crosslinkable polyurea prepolymer described in U.S. Patent No. 6,479,587 and in U.S. Published Application No. 2005/0113549; crosslinkable polyacrylamide; crosslinkable statistical copolymers of vinyl lactam, MMA and a comonomer, which are disclosed in EP 655,470 and U.S. Patent No. 5,712,356; crosslinkable copolymers of vinyl lactam, vinyl acetate and vinyl alcohol, which are disclosed in EP 712,867 and U.S. Patent No. 5,665,840; polyether-polyester copolymers with crosslinkable side chains which are disclosed in EP 932,635 and U.S. Patent No. 6,492,478; branched polyalkylene glycol-urethane prepolymers disclosed in EP 958,315 and U.S. Patent No. 6,165,408; polyalkylene glycol-tetra(meth)acrylate prepolymers disclosed in EP 961,941 and U.S. Patent No. 6,221,303; and crosslinkable polyallylamine gluconolactone prepolymers disclosed in International Application No. WO 2000/31150 and U.S. Patent No. 6,472,489.

Any suitable UV-absorbing vinylic monomers can be used in a polymerizable composition for preparing a polymer of the invention. Examples of preferred UV-absorbing and UV/HEVL-absorbing, benzotriazole-containing vinylic monomers include without

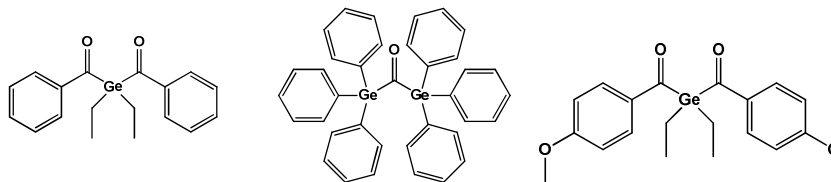
limitation: 2-(2-hydroxy-5-vinylphenyl)-2H-benzotriazole, 2-(2-hydroxy-5-acryloyloxyphenyl)-2H-benzotriazole, 2-(2-hydroxy-3-methacrylamido methyl-5-tert octylphenyl) benzotriazole, 2-(2'-hydroxy-5'-methacrylamidophenyl)-5-chlorobenzotriazole, 2-(2'-hydroxy-5'-methacrylamidophenyl)-5-methoxybenzotriazole, 2-(2'-hydroxy-5'-methacryloxypropyl-3'-t-butyl-phenyl)-5-chlorobenzotriazole, 2-(2'-hydroxy-5'-methacryloxypropylphenyl) benzotriazole, 2-hydroxy-5-methoxy-3-(5-(trifluoromethyl)-2H-benzo[d][1,2,3]triazol-2-yl)benzyl methacrylate (WL-1), 2-hydroxy-5-methoxy-3-(5-methoxy-2H-benzo[d][1,2,3]triazol-2-yl)benzyl methacrylate (WL-5), 3-(5-fluoro-2H-benzo[d][1,2,3]triazol-2-yl)-2-hydroxy-5-methoxybenzyl methacrylate (WL-2), 3-(2H-benzo[d][1,2,3]triazol-2-yl)-2-hydroxy-5-methoxybenzyl methacrylate (WL-3), 3-(5-chloro-2H-benzo[d][1,2,3]triazol-2-yl)-2-hydroxy-5-methoxybenzyl methacrylate (WL-4), 2-hydroxy-5-methoxy-3-(5-methyl-2H-benzo[d][1,2,3]triazol-2-yl)benzyl methacrylate (WL-6), 2-hydroxy-5-methyl-3-(5-(trifluoromethyl)-2H-benzo[d][1,2,3]triazol-2-yl)benzyl methacrylate (WL-7), 4-allyl-2-(5-chloro-2H-benzo[d][1,2,3]triazol-2-yl)-6-methoxyphenol (WL-8), 2-{2'-Hydroxy-3'-tert-5'-[3''-(4''-vinylbenzyloxy)propoxy]phenyl}-5-methoxy-2H-benzotriazole, phenol, 2-(5-chloro-2H-benzotriazol-2-yl)-6-(1,1-dimethylethyl)-4-ethenyl- (UVAM), 2-(2'-hydroxy-5'-methacryloxyethylphenyl) benzotriazole (2-Propenoic acid, 2-methyl-, 2-[3-(2H-benzotriazol-2-yl)-4-hydroxyphenyl]ethyl ester, Norbloc), 2-{2'-Hydroxy-3'-tert-butyl-5'-[3'-methacryloyloxypropoxy]phenyl}-5-methoxy-2H-benzotriazole (UV13), 2-[2'-Hydroxy-3'-tert-butyl-5'-(3'-acryloyloxypropoxy)phenyl]-5-trifluoromethyl-2H-benzotriazole (CF₃-UV13), 2-(2'-hydroxy-5-methacrylamidophenyl)-5-methoxybenzotriazole (UV6), 2-(3-allyl-2-hydroxy-5-methylphenyl)-2H-benzotriazole (UV9), 2-(2-Hydroxy-3-methyl-5-methylphenyl)-2H-benzotriazole (UV12), 2-3'-t-butyl-2'-hydroxy-5'-(3''-dimethylvinylsilylpropoxy)-2'-hydroxyphenyl)-5-methoxybenzotriazole (UV15), 2-(2'-hydroxy-5'-methacryloylpropyl-3'-tert-butylphenyl)-5-methoxy-2H-benzotriazole (UV16), 2-(2'-hydroxy-5'-acryloylpropyl-3'-tert-butylphenyl)-5-methoxy-2H-benzotriazole (UV16A), 2-Methylacrylic acid 3-[3-tert-butyl-5-(5-chlorobenzotriazol-2-yl)-4-hydroxyphenyl]-propyl ester (16-100, CAS#96478-15-8), 2-(3-(tert-butyl)-4-hydroxy-5-(5-methoxy-2H-benzo[d][1,2,3]triazol-2-yl)phenoxy)ethyl methacrylate (16-102); Phenol, 2-(5-chloro-2H-benzotriazol-2-yl)-6-methoxy-4-(2-propen-1-yl) (CAS#1260141-20-5); 2-[2-Hydroxy-5-[3-(methacryloyloxy)propyl]-3-tert-butylphenyl]-5-chloro-2H-benzotriazole; Phenol, 2-(5-ethenyl-2H-benzotriazol-2-yl)-4-methyl-, homopolymer (9CI) (CAS#83063-87-0). In accordance with the invention, the polymerizable composition comprises about 0.2% to about 5.0%, preferably about 0.3% to about 2.5%, more preferably about 0.5% to about 1.8%, by weight of a UV-absorbing agent.

Examples of suitable thermal initiators include, but are not limited to, 2,2'-azobis (2,4-dimethylpentanenitrile), 2,2'-azobis (2-methylpropanenitrile), 2,2'-azobis (2-methylbutanenitrile), peroxides such as benzoyl peroxide, and the like. Preferably, the

thermal initiator is 2,2'-azobis(isobutyronitrile) (AIBN).

Suitable photoinitiators are benzoin methyl ether, diethoxyacetophenone, a benzoylphosphine oxide, 1-hydroxycyclohexyl phenyl ketone and Darocur and Irgacur types, preferably Darocur 1173® and Darocur 2959®, Germane-based Norrish Type I photoinitiators. Examples of benzoylphosphine initiators include 2,4,6-trimethylbenzoyldiphenylphosphine oxide; bis-(2,6-dichlorobenzoyl)-4-N-propylphenylphosphine oxide; and bis-(2,6-dichlorobenzoyl)-4-N-butylphenylphosphine oxide. Reactive photoinitiators which can be incorporated, for example, into a macromer or can be used as a special monomer are also suitable. Examples of reactive photoinitiators are those disclosed in EP 632 329, herein incorporated by reference in its entirety. The polymerization can then be triggered off by actinic radiation, for example light, in particular UV light of a suitable wavelength. The spectral requirements can be controlled accordingly, if appropriate, by addition of suitable photosensitizers.

Where a vinylic monomer capable of absorbing ultra-violet radiation and high energy violet light (HEVL) is used in the invention, a Germane-based Norrish Type I photoinitiator and a light source including a light in the region of about 400 to about 550 nm are preferably used to initiate a free-radical polymerization. Any Germane-based Norrish Type I photoinitiators can be used in this invention, so long as they are capable of initiating a free-radical polymerization under irradiation with a light source including a light in the region of about 400 to about 550 nm. Examples of Germane-based Norrish Type I photoinitiators are acylgermanium compounds described in US 7,605,190 (herein incorporated by reference in its entirety). Preferably, the monomer of lens-forming materials comprises at least one of the following acylgermanium compounds.



The bioactive agent is any compound that can prevent a malady in the eye or reduce the symptoms of an eye malady. The bioactive agent can be a drug, an amino acid (e.g., taurine, glycine, etc.), a polypeptide, a protein, a nucleic acid, or any combination thereof. Examples of drugs useful herein include, but are not limited to, rebamipide, ketotifen, olaptidine, cromoglycolate, cyclosporine, nedocromil, levocabastine, lodoxamide, ketotifen, or the pharmaceutically acceptable salt or ester thereof. Other examples of bioactive agents include 2-pyrrolidone-5-carboxylic acid (PCA), alpha hydroxyl acids (e.g., glycolic, lactic, malic, tartaric, mandelic and citric acids and salts thereof, etc.), linoleic and gamma linoleic acids, and vitamins (e.g., B5, A, B6, etc.).

Examples of leachable lubricants include without limitation mucin-like materials (e.g., polyglycolic acid) and non-crosslinkable hydrophilic polymers (i.e., without ethylenically unsaturated groups). Any hydrophilic polymers or copolymers without any ethylenically unsaturated groups can be used as leachable lubricants. Preferred examples of non-crosslinkable hydrophilic polymers include, but are not limited to, polyvinyl alcohols (PVAs), polyamides, polyimides, polylactone, a homopolymer of a vinyl lactam, a copolymer of at least one vinyl lactam in the presence or in the absence of one or more hydrophilic vinylic comonomers, a homopolymer of acrylamide or methacrylamide, a copolymer of acrylamide or methacrylamide with one or more hydrophilic vinylic monomers, polyethylene oxide (i.e., polyethylene glycol (PEG)), a polyoxyethylene derivative, poly-N-N-dimethylacrylamide, polyacrylic acid, poly 2 ethyl oxazoline, heparin polysaccharides, polysaccharides, and mixtures thereof. The weight-average molecular weight M_w of the non-crosslinkable hydrophilic polymer is preferably from 5,000 to 1,00,000.

Examples of leachable tear-stabilizing agents include, without limitation, phospholipids, monoglycerides, diglycerides, triglycerides, glycolipids, glyceroglycolipids, sphingolipids, sphingo-glycolipids, fatty alcohols, fatty acids, mineral oils, and mixtures thereof. Preferably, a tear stabilizing agent is a phospholipid, a monoglyceride, a diglyceride, a triglyceride, a glycolipid, a glyceroglycolipid, a sphingolipid, a sphingo-glycolipid, a fatty acid having 8 to 36 carbon atoms, a fatty alcohol having 8 to 36 carbon atoms, or a mixture thereof.

In accordance with the invention, a SiHy lens formulation can be a solution or a melt at a temperature from about 20°C to about 85°C. Preferably, a polymerizable composition is a solution of all desirable components in a suitable solvent, or a mixture of suitable solvents.

A SiHy lens formulation can be prepared by dissolving all of the desirable components in any suitable solvent, such as, water, a mixture of water and one or more organic solvents miscible with water, an organic solvent, or a mixture of one or more organic solvents, as known to a person skilled in the art.

Example of preferred organic solvents includes without limitation, tetrahydrofuran, tripropylene glycol methyl ether, dipropylene glycol methyl ether, ethylene glycol n-butyl ether, ketones (e.g., acetone, methyl ethyl ketone, etc.), diethylene glycol n-butyl ether, diethylene glycol methyl ether, ethylene glycol phenyl ether, propylene glycol methyl ether, propylene glycol methyl ether acetate, dipropylene glycol methyl ether acetate, propylene glycol n-propyl ether, dipropylene glycol n-propyl ether, tripropylene glycol n-butyl ether, propylene glycol n-butyl ether, dipropylene glycol n-butyl ether, tripropylene glycol n-butyl ether, propylene glycol phenyl ether dipropylene glycol dimethyl ether, polyethylene glycols, polypropylene glycols, ethyl acetate, butyl acetate, amyl acetate, methyl lactate, ethyl lactate, i-propyl lactate, methylene chloride, 2-butanol, 1-propanol, 2-propanol, menthol,

cyclohexanol, cyclopentanol and exonorborneol, 2-pentanol, 3-pentanol, 2-hexanol, 3-hexanol, 3-methyl-2-butanol, 2-heptanol, 2-octanol, 2-nonanol, 2-decanol, 3-octanol, norborneol, tert-butanol, tert-amyl alcohol, 2-methyl-2-pentanol, 2,3-dimethyl-2-butanol, 3-methyl-3-pentanol, 1-methylcyclohexanol, 2-methyl-2-hexanol, 3,7-dimethyl-3-octanol, 1-chloro-2-methyl-2-propanol, 2-methyl-2-heptanol, 2-methyl-2-octanol, 2-methyl-2-nonanol, 2-methyl-2-decanol, 3-methyl-3-hexanol, 3-methyl-3-heptanol, 4-methyl-4-heptanol, 3-methyl-3-octanol, 4-methyl-4-octanol, 3-methyl-3-nonanol, 4-methyl-4-nonanol, 3-methyl-3-octanol, 3-ethyl-3-hexanol, 3-methyl-3-heptanol, 4-ethyl-4-heptanol, 4-propyl-4-heptanol, 4-isopropyl-4-heptanol, 2,4-dimethyl-2-pentanol, 1-methylcyclopentanol, 1-ethylcyclopentanol, 1-ethylcyclopentanol, 3-hydroxy-3-methyl-1-butene, 4-hydroxy-4-methyl-1-cyclopentanol, 2-phenyl-2-propanol, 2-methoxy-2-methyl-2-propanol, 2,3,4-trimethyl-3-pentanol, 3,7-dimethyl-3-octanol, 2-phenyl-2-butanol, 2-methyl-1-phenyl-2-propanol and 3-ethyl-3-pentanol, 1-ethoxy-2-propanol, 1-methyl-2-propanol, t-amyl alcohol, isopropanol, 1-methyl-2-pyrrolidone, N,N-dimethylpropionamide, dimethyl formamide, dimethyl acetamide, dimethyl propionamide, N-methyl pyrrolidinone, and mixtures thereof.

Lens molds for making contact lenses are well known to a person skilled in the art and, for example, are employed in cast molding or spin casting. For example, a mold (for cast molding) generally comprises at least two mold sections (or portions) or mold halves, i.e. first and second mold halves. The first mold half defines a first molding (or optical) surface and the second mold half defines a second molding (or optical) surface. The first and second mold halves are configured to receive each other such that a lens forming cavity is formed between the first molding surface and the second molding surface. The molding surface of a mold half is the cavity-forming surface of the mold and in direct contact with lens-forming material.

Methods of manufacturing mold sections for cast-molding a contact lens are generally well known to those of ordinary skill in the art. The process of the present invention is not limited to any particular method of forming a mold. In fact, any method of forming a mold can be used in the present invention. The first and second mold halves can be formed through various techniques, such as injection molding or lathing. Examples of suitable processes for forming the mold halves are disclosed in U.S. Patent Nos. 4,444,711 to Schad; 4,460,534 to Boehm et al.; 5,843,346 to Morrill; and 5,894,002 to Boneberger et al., which are also incorporated herein by reference.

Virtually all materials known in the art for making molds can be used to make molds for making contact lenses. For example, polymeric materials, such as polyethylene, polypropylene, polystyrene, PMMA, Topas[®] COC grade 8007-S10 (clear amorphous copolymer of ethylene and norbornene, from Ticona GmbH of Frankfurt, Germany and Summit, New Jersey), or the like can be used. Other materials that allow UV light

transmission could be used, such as quartz glass and sapphire.

In a preferred embodiment, reusable molds are used and the silicone-hydrogel lens-forming composition is cured actinically under a spatial limitation of actinic radiation to form a SiHy contact lens. Examples of preferred reusable molds are those disclosed in U.S. patent Nos. 6,800,225, 7,384,590, and 7,387,759, which are incorporated by reference in their entireties. Reusable molds can be made of quartz, glass, sapphire, CaF_2 , a cyclic olefin copolymer (such as for example, Topas[®] COC grade 8007-S10 (clear amorphous copolymer of ethylene and norbornene) from Ticona GmbH of Frankfurt, Germany and Summit, New Jersey, Zeonex[®] and Zeonor[®] from Zeon Chemicals LP, Louisville, KY), polymethylmethacrylate (PMMA), polyoxymethylene from DuPont (Delrin), Ultem[®] (polyetherimide) from G.E. Plastics, PrimoSpire[®], etc..

In accordance with the invention, the polymerizable composition can be introduced (dispensed) into a cavity formed by a mold according to any known methods.

After the polymerizable composition is dispensed into the mold, it is polymerized to produce a contact lens. Crosslinking may be initiated thermally or actinically, preferably by exposing the lens-forming composition in the mold to a spatial limitation of actinic radiation to crosslink the polymerizable components in the polymerizable composition.

Opening of the mold so that the molded article can be removed from the mold may take place in a manner known *per se*.

The molded contact lens can be subject to lens extraction to remove unpolymerized polymerizable components. The extraction solvent can be any solvent known to a person skilled in the art. Examples of suitable extraction solvent are those described above. Preferably, water or an aqueous solution is used as extraction solvent. After extraction, lenses can be hydrated in water or an aqueous solution of a wetting agent (e.g., a hydrophilic polymer).

Examples of homo- or copolymers of acrylic acid or $\text{C}_1\text{-C}_3$ alkylacrylic acid for forming a base coating on silicone hydrogel contact lenses include, without limitation, polyacrylic acid, polymethacrylic acid, polyethylacrylic acid, polypropylacrylic acid, poly(acrylic acid-co-methacrylic acid), poly[(meth)acrylic acid-co-ethylacrylic acid], poly[(meth)acrylic acid-co-propylacrylic acid], poly[(meth)acrylic acid-co-acrylamide], poly[(meth)acrylic acid-co-vinylpyrrolidone], poly[ethylacrylic acid-co-acrylamide], poly[ethylacrylic acid-co-vinylpyrrolidone], poly[propylacrylic acid-co-acrylamide], poly[propylacrylic acid-co-vinylpyrrolidone], hydrolyzed poly[(meth)acrylic acid-co-vinylacetate], hydrolyzed poly[ethylacrylic acid-co-vinylacetate], hydrolyzed poly[propylacrylic acid-co-vinylacetate], or combinations thereof.

In accordance with the invention, the weight average molecular weight M_w of a homo- or copolymer of acrylic acid or $\text{C}_1\text{-C}_3$ alkylacrylic acid for forming a base coating on silicone

hydrogel contact lenses is at least about 10,000 Daltons, preferably at least about 50,000 Daltons, more preferably from about 100,000 Daltons to about 5,000,000 Daltons.

An aqueous solution of a homo- or copolymer of acrylic acid or C₁-C₃ alkylacrylic acid for forming a base coating on silicone hydrogel contact lenses can be prepared by dissolving the homo- or copolymer in water. The pH of the aqueous solution is about 2.5 or higher, preferably from about 2.5 to about 5.5, more preferably from about 3.0 to about 5.

Contacting of a SiHy contact lens with a coating solution of a homo- or copolymer of acrylic acid or C₁-C₃ alkylacrylic acid can occur by dipping the lens into the coating solution or by spraying the lens with the coating solution. One contacting process involves solely dipping the SiHy contact lens in a bath of a coating solution for a period of time or alternatively dipping the SiHy contact lens sequentially in a series of bath of coating solutions for a fixed shorter time period for each bath. Another contacting process involves solely spray a coating solution. However, a number of alternatives involve various combinations of spraying- and dipping- steps may be designed by a person having ordinary skill in the art. The contacting time of a SiHy contact lens with a coating solution of a reactive polymer may last up to about 20 minutes.

In accordance with the invention, the stability (or durability) of a base coating on a SiHy contact lens is determined (characterized) by measuring water-break-up-time (WBUT) of the SiHy contact lens with the base coating thereon after being autoclaved at 115°C to 125°C in a phosphate buffered saline having a pH from about 6.5 to about 7.5 for about 30 minutes.

In accordance with the invention, a water-soluble and thermally-crosslinkable hydrophilic polymeric material having azetidinium groups and optionally (but preferably) amino or carboxyl groups can be a poly(2-oxazoline-co-ethyleneimine)-epichlorohydrin or a chemically-modified poly(2-oxazoline-co-ethyleneimine)-epichlorohydrin, chemically-modified polyamidoamine-epichlorohydrins, or combinations thereof. comprises (i) from about 20% to about 95% by weight of first polymer chains derived from a polyamidoamine-epichlorohydrin or a poly(2-oxazoline-co-ethyleneimine)-epichlorohydrin, (ii) from about 5% to about 80% by weight of hydrophilic moieties or second polymer chains derived from at least one hydrophilicity-enhancing agent having at least one reactive functional group selected from the group consisting of amino group, carboxyl group, thiol group, and combination thereof, wherein the hydrophilic moieties or second polymer chains are covalently attached to the first polymer chains through one or more covalent linkages each formed between one azetidinium group of the polyamidoamine-epichlorohydrin or the poly(2-oxazoline-co-ethyleneimine)-epichlorohydrin and one amino, carboxyl or thiol group of the hydrophilicity-enhancing agent, and (iii) azetidinium groups which are parts of the first polymer chains or pendant or terminal groups covalently attached to the first polymer chains. The composition

of the hydrophilic polymeric material is determined by the composition (based on the total weight of the reactants) of a reactants mixture used for preparing the thermally-crosslinkable hydrophilic polymeric material according to the crosslinking reactions shown in Scheme I above. For example, if a reactant mixture comprises about 75% by weight of a polyamidoamine-epichlorohydrin and about 25% by weight of at least one hydrophilicity-enhancing agent based on the total weight of the reactants, then the resultant hydrophilic polymeric material comprise about 75% by weight of first polymer chains derived from the polyamidoamine-epichlorohydrin and about 25% by weight of hydrophilic moieties or second polymer chains derived from said at least one hydrophilicity-enhancing agent. The azetidinium groups of the thermally-crosslinkable hydrophilic polymeric material are those azetidinium groups (of the polyamidoamine-epichlorohydrin) which do not participate in crosslinking reactions for preparing the thermally-crosslinkable hydrophilic polymeric material.

Any suitable hydrophilicity-enhancing agents can be used in the invention so long as they contain at least one amino group, at least one carboxyl group, and/or at least one thiol group.

A preferred class of hydrophilicity-enhancing agents include without limitation: primary amino-, secondary amino-, carboxyl- or thiol-containing monosaccharides (e.g., 3-amino-1,2-propanediol, 1-thiolglycerol, 5-keto-D-gluconic acid, galactosamine, glucosamine, galacturonic acid, gluconic acid, glucosaminic acid, mannosamine, saccharic acid 1,4-lactone, saccharide acid, Ketodeoxynonulosonic acid, *N*-methyl-D-glucamine, 1-amino-1-deoxy- β -D-galactose, 1-amino-1-deoxysorbitol, 1-methylamino-1-deoxysorbitol, *N*-aminoethyl gluconamide); primary amino-, secondary amino-, carboxyl- or thiol-containing disaccharides (e.g., chondroitin disaccharide sodium salt, di(β -D-xylopyranosyl)amine, digalacturonic acid, heparin disaccharide, hyaluronic acid disaccharide, Lactobionic acid); and primary amino-, secondary amino-, carboxyl- or thiol-containing oligosaccharides (e.g., carboxymethyl- β -cyclodextrin sodium salt, trigalacturonic acid); and combinations thereof.

Another preferred class of hydrophilicity-enhancing agents is hydrophilic polymers having one or more (primary or secondary) amino, carboxyl and/or thiol groups. More preferably, the content of the amino (--NHR' with R' as defined above), carboxyl (--COOH) and/or thiol (--SH) groups in a hydrophilic polymer as a hydrophilicity-enhancing agent is less than about 40%, preferably less than about 30%, more preferably less than about 20%, even more preferably less than about 10%, by weight based on the total weight of the hydrophilic polymer.

One preferred class of hydrophilic polymers as hydrophilicity-enhancing agents are (primary or secondary) amino- or carboxyl-containing polysaccharides, for example, such as, carboxymethylcellulose (having a carboxyl content of about 40% or less, which is estimated

based on the composition of repeating units, $-\text{[C}_6\text{H}_{10-m}\text{O}_5(\text{CH}_2\text{CO}_2\text{H})_m\text{]}-$ in which m is 1 to 3), carboxyethylcellulose (having a carboxyl content of about 36% or less, which is estimated based on the composition of repeating units, $-\text{[C}_6\text{H}_{10-m}\text{O}_5(\text{C}_2\text{H}_4\text{CO}_2\text{H})_m\text{]}-$ in which m is 1 to 3) carboxypropylcellulose (having a carboxyl content of about 32% or less, which is estimated based on the composition of repeating units, $-\text{[C}_6\text{H}_{10-m}\text{O}_5(\text{C}_3\text{H}_6\text{CO}_2\text{H})_m\text{]}-$, in which m is 1 to 3), hyaluronic acid (having a carboxyl content of about 11%, which is estimated based on the composition of repeating units, $-(\text{C}_{13}\text{H}_{20}\text{O}_9\text{NCO}_2\text{H})-$), chondroitin sulfate (having a carboxyl content of about 9.8%, which is estimated based on the composition of repeating units, $-(\text{C}_{12}\text{H}_{18}\text{O}_{13}\text{NS CO}_2\text{H})-$), or combinations thereof.

Another preferred class of hydrophilic polymers as hydrophilicity-enhancing agents include without limitation: poly(ethylene glycol) (PEG) with mono-amino (primary or secondary amino), carboxyl or thiol group (e.g., PEG-NH₂, PEG-SH, PEG-COOH); H₂N-PEG-NH₂; HOOC-PEG-COOH; HS-PEG-SH; H₂N-PEG-COOH; HOOC-PEG-SH; H₂N-PEG-SH; multi-arm PEG with one or more amino (primary or secondary), carboxyl or thiol groups; PEG dendrimers with one or more amino (primary or secondary), carboxyl or thiol groups; a diamino-(primary or secondary) or dicarboxyl-terminated homo- or co-polymer of a non-reactive hydrophilic vinylic monomer; a monoamino- (primary or secondary) or monocarboxyl-terminated homo- or co-polymer of a non-reactive hydrophilic vinylic monomer; a copolymer which is a polymerization product of a composition comprising (1) about 60% by weight or less, preferably from about 0.1% to about 30%, more preferably from about 0.5% to about 20%, even more preferably from about 1% to about 15%, by weight of one or more reactive vinylic monomers and (2) at least one non-reactive hydrophilic vinylic monomer; and combinations thereof. Reactive vinylic monomer(s) and non-reactive hydrophilic vinylic monomer(s) are those described previously.

More preferably, a hydrophilic polymer as a hydrophilicity-enhancing agent is PEG-NH₂; PEG-SH; PEG-COOH; H₂N-PEG-NH₂; HOOC-PEG-COOH; HS-PEG-SH; H₂N-PEG-COOH; HOOC-PEG-SH; H₂N-PEG-SH; multi-arm PEG with one or more amino, carboxyl or thiol groups; PEG dendrimers with one or more amino, carboxyl or thiol groups; a monoamino-, monocarboxyl-, diamino- or dicarboxyl-terminated homo- or copolymer of a non-reactive hydrophilic vinylic monomer selected from the group consisting of acryamide (AAm), N,N-dimethylacrylamide (DMA), N-vinylpyrrolidone (NVP), N-vinyl-N-methyl acetamide, glycerol (meth)acrylate, hydroxyethyl (meth)acrylate, N-hydroxyethyl (meth)acrylamide, C₁-C₄-alkoxy polyethylene glycol (meth)acrylate having a weight average molecular weight of up to 400 Daltons, vinyl alcohol, N-methyl-3-methylene-2-pyrrolidone, 1-methyl-5-methylene-2-pyrrolidone, 5-methyl-3-methylene-2-pyrrolidone, N,N-dimethylaminoethyl (meth)acrylate, N,N-dimethylaminopropyl (meth)acrylamide, (meth)acryloyloxyethyl phosphorylcholine, and combinations thereof; a copolymer which is a

polymerization product of a composition comprising (1) from about 0.1% to about 30%, preferably from about 0.5% to about 20%, more preferably from about 1% to about 15%, by weight of acrylic acid, C₁-C₃ alkylacrylic acid, allylamine and/or amino-C₂-C₄ alkyl (meth)acrylate, and (2) at least one non-reactive hydrophilic vinylic monomer selected from the group consisting of acryamide, N,N-dimethylacrylamide, N-vinylpyrrolidone, (meth)acryloyloxyethyl phosphorylcholine, N-vinyl-N-methyl acetamide, glycerol (meth)acrylate, hydroxyethyl (meth)acrylate, N-hydroxyethyl (meth)acrylamide, C₁-C₄-alkoxy polyethylene glycol (meth)acrylate having a weight average molecular weight of up to 400 Daltons, vinyl alcohol, and combination thereof.

Most preferably, the hydrophilicity-enhancing agent as a hydrophilicity-enhancing agent is PEG-NH₂; PEG-SH; PEG-COOH; monoamino-, monocarboxyl-, diamino- or dicarboxyl-terminated polyvinylpyrrolidone; monoamino-, monocarboxyl-, diamino- or dicarboxyl-terminated polyacrylamide; monoamino-, monocarboxyl-, diamino- or dicarboxyl-terminated poly(DMA); monoamino- or monocarboxyl-, diamino- or dicarboxyl-terminated poly(DMA-co-NVP); monoamino-, monocarboxyl-, diamino- or dicarboxyl-terminated poly(NVP-co-N,N-dimethylaminoethyl (meth)acrylate)); monoamino-, monocarboxyl-, diamino- or dicarboxyl-terminated poly(vinylalcohol); monoamino-, monocarboxyl-, diamino- or dicarboxyl-terminated poly[(meth)acryloyloxyethyl phosphorylcholine] homopolymer or copolymer; monoamino-, monocarboxyl-, diamino- or dicarboxyl-terminated poly(NVP-co-vinyl alcohol); monoamino-, monocarboxyl-, diamino- or dicarboxyl-terminated poly(DMA-co-vinyl alcohol); poly[(meth)acrylic acid-co-acrylamide] with from about 0.1% to about 30%, preferably from about 0.5% to about 20%, more preferably from about 1% to about 15%, by weight of (meth)acrylic acid; poly[(meth)acrylic acid-co-NVP] with from about 0.1% to about 30%, preferably from about 0.5% to about 20%, more preferably from about 1% to about 15%, by weight of (meth)acrylic acid; a copolymer which is a polymerization product of a composition comprising (1) (meth)acryloyloxyethyl phosphorylcholine and (2) from about 0.1% to about 30%, preferably from about 0.5% to about 20%, more preferably from about 1% to about 15%, by weight of acrylic acid, C₁-C₃ alkylacrylic acid, allylamine and/or amino-C₂-C₄alkyl (meth)acrylate; and combination thereof.

PEGs with functional groups and multi-arm PEGs with functional groups can be obtained from various commercial suppliers, e.g., Polyscience, and Shearwater Polymers, inc., etc.

Monoamino-, monocarboxyl-, diamino- or dicarboxyl-terminated homo- or copolymers of one or more non-reactive hydrophilic vinylic monomers or of a phosphorylcholine-containing vinylic monomer can be prepared according to procedures described in U.S. Patent No. 6,218,508, herein incorporated by reference in its entirety. For example, to prepare a diamino- or dicarboxyl-terminated homo- or co-polymer of a non-reactive

hydrophilic vinylic monomer, the non-reactive vinylic monomer, a chain transfer agent with an amino or carboxyl group (e.g., 2-aminoethanethiol, 2-mercaptopropionic acid, thioglycolic acid, thiolactic acid, or other hydroxymercaptanes, aminomercaptans, or carboxyl-containing mercaptanes) and optionally other vinylic monomer are copolymerized (thermally or actinically) with a reactive vinylic monomer (having an amino or carboxyl group), in the presence of a free-radical initiator. Generally, the molar ratio of chain transfer agent to that of all of vinylic monomers other than the reactive vinylic monomer is from about 1:5 to about 1:100, whereas the molar ratio of chain transfer agent to the reactive vinylic monomer is 1:1. In such preparation, the chain transfer agent with amino or carboxyl group is used to control the molecular weight of the resultant hydrophilic polymer and forms a terminal end of the resultant hydrophilic polymer so as to provide the resultant hydrophilic polymer with one terminal amino or carboxyl group, while the reactive vinylic monomer provides the other terminal carboxyl or amino group to the resultant hydrophilic polymer. Similarly, to prepare a monoamino- or monocarboxyl-terminated homo- or co-polymer of a non-reactive hydrophilic vinylic monomer, the non-reactive vinylic monomer, a chain transfer agent with an amino or carboxyl group (e.g., 2-aminoethanethiol, 2-mercaptopropionic acid, thioglycolic acid, thiolactic acid, or other hydroxymercaptanes, aminomercaptans, or carboxyl-containing mercaptanes) and optionally other vinylic monomers are copolymerized (thermally or actinically) in the absence of any reactive vinylic monomer.

As used herein, a copolymer of a non-reactive hydrophilic vinylic monomer refers to a polymerization product of a non-reactive hydrophilic vinylic monomer with one or more additional vinylic monomers. Copolymers comprising a non-reactive hydrophilic vinylic monomer and a reactive vinylic monomer (e.g., a carboxyl-containing vinylic monomer, a primary amino group-containing vinylic monomer or a secondary amino group-containing vinylic monomer) can be prepared according to any well-known radical polymerization methods or obtained from commercial suppliers. Copolymers containing methacryloyloxyethyl phosphorylcholine and carboxyl-containing vinylic monomer (or amino-containing vinylic monomer) can be obtained from NOP Corporation (e.g., LIPIDURE® -A and -AF).

The weight average molecular weight M_w of the hydrophilic polymer having at least one amino, carboxyl or thiol group (as a hydrophilicity-enhancing agent) is preferably from about 500 to about 1,000,000, more preferably from about 1,000 to about 500,000, even more preferably from about 5,000 to about 250,000 Daltons.

In accordance with the invention, the reaction between a hydrophilicity-enhancing agent and a poly(2-oxazoline-co-ethyleneimine)-epichlorohydrin copolymer (or a polyamidoamine-epichlorohydrin or a copolymer of azetidinium-containing vinylic monomer) is carried out at a temperature of from about 40°C to about 100°C for a period of time

sufficient (from about 0.3 hour to about 24 hours, preferably from about 1 hour to about 12 hours, even more preferably from about 2 hours to about 8 hours) to form a water-soluble and thermally-crosslinkable hydrophilic polymeric material containing azetidinium groups.

In accordance with the invention, the concentration of a hydrophilicity-enhancing agent relative to a poly(2-oxazoline-co-ethyleneimine)-epichlorohydrin copolymer (or a polyamidoamine-epichlorohydrin or a copolymer of azetidinium-containing vinylic monomer) must be selected not to render a resultant hydrophilic polymeric material water-insoluble (i.e., a solubility of less than 0.005 g per 100 ml of water at room temperature) and not to consume more than about 99%, preferably about 98%, more preferably about 97%, even more preferably about 96% of the azetidinium groups of the poly(2-oxazoline-co-ethyleneimine)-epichlorohydrin copolymer (or a polyamidoamine-epichlorohydrin or a copolymer of azetidinium-containing vinylic monomer).

In a preferred embodiment, a water-soluble and thermally-crosslinkable hydrophilic polymeric material having azetidinium groups comprises: azetidinium groups; from about 20% to about 95%, preferably from about 35% to about 90%, more preferably from about 50% to about 85%, by weight of first polymer chains derived from a poly(2-oxazoline-co-ethyleneimine)-epichlorohydrin copolymer or a polyamidoamine-epichlorohydrin or a copolymer of azetidinium-containing vinylic monomer; and from about 5% to about 80%, preferably from about 10% to about 65%, even more preferably from about 15% to about 50%, by weight of hydrophilic moieties or second polymer chains derived from at least one hydrophilicity-enhancing agent having at least one reactive functional group selected from the group consisting of primary amino group, secondary amino group, carboxyl group, thiol group, and combination thereof.

In accordance with the invention, the step of heating is performed preferably by autoclaving the silicone hydrogel contact lens with a base coating thereon immersed in a packaging solution (i.e., a buffered aqueous solution) in a sealed lens package at a temperature of from about 115°C to about 125°C for approximately 20-90 minutes. In accordance with this embodiment of the invention, the packaging solution is a buffered aqueous solution which is ophthalmically safe after autoclave.

Lens packages (or containers) are well known to a person skilled in the art for autoclaving and storing a soft contact lens. Any lens packages can be used in the invention. Preferably, a lens package is a blister package which comprises a base and a cover, wherein the cover is detachably sealed to the base, wherein the base includes a cavity for receiving a sterile packaging solution and the contact lens.

Lenses are packaged in individual packages, sealed, and sterilized (e.g., by autoclave at about 120°C or higher for at least 30 minutes under pressure) prior to dispensing to users. A person skilled in the art will understand well how to seal and sterilize

lens packages.

In accordance with the invention, a packaging solution contains at least one buffering agent and one or more other ingredients known to a person skilled in the art. Examples of other ingredients include without limitation, tonicity agents, surfactants, antibacterial agents, preservatives, and lubricants (e.g., cellulose derivatives, polyvinyl alcohol, polyvinyl pyrrolidone).

The packaging solution contains a buffering agent in an amount sufficient to maintain a pH of the packaging solution in the desired range, for example, preferably in a physiologically acceptable range of about 6.5 to about 7.5. Any known, physiologically compatible buffering agents can be used. Suitable buffering agents as a constituent of the contact lens care composition according to the invention are known to the person skilled in the art. Examples are boric acid, borates, e.g. sodium borate, citric acid, citrates, e.g. potassium citrate, bicarbonates, e.g. sodium bicarbonate, TRIS (2-amino-2-hydroxymethyl-1,3-propanediol), Bis-Tris (Bis-(2-hydroxyethyl)-imino-tris-(hydroxymethyl)-methane), bis-aminopolyols, triethanolamine, ACES (N-(2-hydroxyethyl)-2-aminoethanesulfonic acid), BES (N,N-Bis(2-hydroxyethyl)-2-aminoethanesulfonic acid), HEPES (4-(2-hydroxyethyl)-1-piperazineethanesulfonic acid), MES (2-(N-morpholino)ethanesulfonic acid), MOPS (3-[N-morpholino]-propanesulfonic acid), PIPES (piperazine-N,N'-bis(2-ethanesulfonic acid), TES (N-[Tris(hydroxymethyl)methyl]-2-aminoethanesulfonic acid), salts thereof, phosphate buffers, e.g. Na_2HPO_4 , NaH_2PO_4 , and KH_2PO_4 or mixtures thereof. A preferred bis-aminopolyol is 1,3-bis(tris[hydroxymethyl]-methylamino)propane (bis-TRIS-propane). The amount of each buffer agent in a packaging solution is preferably from 0.001% to 2%, preferably from 0.01% to 1%; most preferably from about 0.05% to about 0.30% by weight.

The packaging solution has a tonicity of from about 200 to about 450 milliosmol (mOsm), preferably from about 250 to about 350 mOsm. The tonicity of a packaging solution can be adjusted by adding organic or inorganic substances which affect the tonicity. Suitable ocularly acceptable tonicity agents include, but are not limited to sodium chloride, potassium chloride, glycerol, propylene glycol, polyols, mannitols, sorbitol, xylitol and mixtures thereof.

A packaging solution of the invention has a viscosity of from about 1 centipoise to about 8 centipoises, more preferably from about 1.5 centipoises to about 5 centipoises, at 25°C.

In a preferred embodiment, the packaging solution comprises preferably from about 0.01% to about 2%, more preferably from about 0.05% to about 1.5%, even more preferably from about 0.1% to about 1%, most preferably from about 0.2% to about 0.5%, by weight of a water-soluble thermally-crosslinkable hydrophilic polymeric material having azetidinium groups.

In another preferred embodiment, a method of the invention can further comprise, before the step of heating, the steps of: contacting at room temperature the silicone hydrogel contact lens having the base coating thereon with an aqueous solution of a water-soluble thermally-crosslinkable hydrophilic polymeric material having azetidinium groups to form a top layer (i.e., an LbL coating) of the thermally-crosslinkable hydrophilic polymeric material on the surface of the silicone hydrogel contact lens, immersing the silicone hydrogel contact lens with the top layer of the thermally-crosslinkable hydrophilic polymeric material in a packaging solution in a lens package; sealing the lens package; and autoclaving the lens package with the silicone hydrogel contact lens therein at a temperature from about 115°C to about 125°C for at least about 20 minutes to form a crosslinked hydrophilic coating on the silicone hydrogel contact lens. Because of being positively charged, the thermally-crosslinkable hydrophilic polymeric material is believed to be capable of forming, on the prime coating of a silicone hydrogel contact lens, a non-covalently-bound layer through physical interactions.

All of the various embodiments including preferred embodiments of an azetidinium-containing vinylic monomer are described above and can be used in this aspect of the invention.

A silicone hydrogel contact lens obtained according to a method of the invention has a surface hydrophilicity/wettability characterized by having an averaged water contact angle of preferably about 90 degrees or less, more preferably about 80 degrees or less, even more preferably about 70 degrees or less, most preferably about 60 degrees or less.

A silicone hydrogel contact lens obtained according to a method of the invention has one property selected from the group consisting of: an oxygen permeability of at least about 40 barrers, preferably at least about 50 barrers, more preferably at least about 60 barrers, even more preferably at least about 70 barrers; an elastic modulus of about 1.5 MPa or less, preferably about 1.2 MPa or less, more preferably about 1.0 or less, even more preferably from about 0.3 MPa to about 1.0 MPa; a water content of from about 15% to about 70%, preferably from about 20% to about 65%, more preferably from about 25% to about 60%, even more preferably from about 30% to about 55% by weight when fully hydrated; a coating durability characterized by surviving a digital rubbing test and combination thereof; and combinations thereof.

The water content of a silicone hydrogel contact lens can be measured according to Bulk Technique as disclosed in US 5,849,811.

It should be understood that although various embodiments including preferred embodiments of the invention may be separately described above, they can be combined and/or used together in any desirable fashion in this aspect of the invention.

The previous disclosure will enable one having ordinary skill in the art to practice the invention. Various modifications, variations, and combinations can be made to the various embodiment described herein. In order to better enable the reader to understand specific embodiments and the advantages thereof, reference to the following examples is suggested. It is intended that the specification and examples be considered as exemplary.

Although various embodiments of the invention have been described using specific terms, devices, and methods, such description is for illustrative purposes only. The words used are words of description rather than of limitation. It is to be understood that changes and variations may be made by those skilled in the art without departing from the spirit or scope of the present invention, which is set forth in the following claims. In addition, it should be understood that aspects of the various embodiments may be interchanged either in whole or in part or can be combined in any manner and/or used together. Therefore, the spirit and scope of the appended claims should not be limited to the description of the preferred versions contained therein.

The following abbreviations are used in the following examples: MCR-M07 represents monobutyl-terminated monomethacryloxypropyl-terminated polydimethylsiloxane; SiGMA represents 3-(3-Methacryloxy-2-hydroxypropoxy)propylbis(trimethylsiloxy)methylsilane; Betacon is an α,ω -methacryloxy-terminated polysiloxane-perfluoropolyether-polysiloxane three-block copolymer which is prepared according to the procedures described in Example A1 of US 5945498 (herein incorporated by reference in its entirety); NVP represents N-vinylpyrrolidone; DMA represent N,N-dimethylacrylamide; MMA represents methyl methacrylate; TEGDMA represent triethyleneglycol dimethacrylate; TEGDVE represents triethyleneglycol divinyl ether; EGDMA represents ethylene glycol dimethacrylate; D1173 represents 2-Hydroxy-2-methylpropiophenone; VAZO 64 represents 2,2'-dimethyl-2,2'-azodipropionitrile; DSM stands double-sided molding using disposable plastic molds (e.g., polypropylene mods); RT represents room temperature.

Example 1

Oxygen Permeability Measurements

The apparent oxygen permeability (Dk_{app}), the apparent oxygen transmissibility (Dk/t), the intrinsic (or edge-corrected) oxygen permeability (Dk_c) of a lens and a lens material are determined according to procedures described in Example 1 of U.S. patent application publication No. 2012/0026457 A1 (herein incorporated by reference in its entirety).

Lubricity Evaluation. The lubricity rating is a qualitative ranking scheme where 0 is assigned to control lenses coated with polyacrylic acid (PAA), 1 is assigned to

Oasys™/TruEye™ commercial lenses and 5 is assigned to commercial Air Optix™ lenses. The samples are rinsed with excess DI water for at least three times and then transferred to PBS before the evaluation. Before the evaluation, hands are rinsed with a soap solution, extensively rinsed with DI water and then dried with KimWipe® towels. The samples are handled between the fingers and a numerical number is assigned for each sample relative to the above standard lenses described above. For example, if lenses are determined to be only slightly better than Air Optix™ lenses, then they are assigned a number 4. For consistency, all ratings are independently collected by the same two operators in order to avoid bias and the data so far reveal very good qualitative agreement and consistency in the evaluation.

Surface hydrophilicity/wetability Tests. Water contact angle on a contact lens is a general measure of the surface hydrophilicity (or wetability) of the contact lens. In particular, a low water contact angle corresponds to more hydrophilic surface. Average contact angles (Sessile Drop) of contact lenses are measured using a VCA 2500 XE contact angle measurement device from AST, Inc., located in Boston, Massachusetts. This equipment is capable of measuring advancing or receding contact angles or sessile (static) contact angles. The measurements are performed on fully hydrated contact lenses and immediately after blot-drying as follows. A contact lens is removed from the vial and washed 3 times in ~200ml of fresh DI water in order to remove loosely bound packaging additives from the lens surface. The lens is then placed on top of a lint-free clean cloth (Alpha Wipe TX1009), dabbed well to remove surface water, mounted on the contact angle measurement pedestal, blown dry with a blast of dry air and finally the sessile drop contact angle is automatically measured using the software provided by the manufacturer. The DI water used for measuring the contact angle has a resistivity > 18MΩcm and the droplet volume used is 2μl. Typically, uncoated silicone hydrogel lenses (after autoclave) have a sessile drop contact angle around 120 degrees. The tweezers and the pedestal are washed well with Isopropanol and rinsed with DI water before coming in contact with the contact lenses.

Water Break-up Time (WBUT) Tests. The wettability of the lenses (after autoclave) is also assessed by determining the time required for the water film to start breaking on the lens surface. Briefly, lenses are removed from the vial and washed 3 times in ~ 200ml of fresh DI water in order to remove loosely bound packaging additives from the lens surface. The lens is removed from the solution and held against a bright light source. The time that is needed for the water film to break (de-wet) exposing the underlying lens material is noted visually. Uncoated lenses typically instantly break upon removal from DI water and are assigned a WBUT of 0 seconds. Lenses exhibiting WBUT ≥ 5 seconds are considered wettable and are expected to exhibit adequate wettability (ability to support the tear film) on-eye.

Tests of base coating stability (or durability). The lenses with a base thereon are

autoclaved at about 121°C for 30 minutes in a package containing a phosphate buffered saline (pH 7.2, [NaCl] = 0.6% by weight). The autoclaved lenses are assessed by determining the time required for the water film to start breaking on the lens surface. The base coating of a lens exhibiting a WBUT of about 10 seconds or more (preferably about 15 seconds or more, about 20 seconds or more) after being autoclaved are considered stable (or durable).

Coating Intactness Tests. The intactness of a coating on the surface of a contact lens can be tested according to Sudan Black stain test as follow. Contact lenses with a coating (an LbL coating, a plasma coating, or any other coatings) are dipped into a Sudan Black dye solution (Sudan Black in vitamin E oil). Sudan Black dye is hydrophobic and has a great tendency to be adsorbed by a hydrophobic material or onto a hydrophobic lens surface or hydrophobic spots on a partially coated surface of a hydrophobic lens (e.g., silicone hydrogel contact lens). If the coating on a hydrophobic lens is intact, no staining spots should be observed on or in the lens. All of the lenses under test are fully hydrated.

Digital Rubbing Tests. The lenses are digitally rubbed (wearing disposable powder-free latex gloves) with Solo-care® multi-purpose lens care solution for 30 times and then rinsed with saline. The above procedure is repeated for a given times, e.g., from 1 to 30 times, (i.e., number of consecutive digital rubbing tests which imitate cleaning and soaking cycles). The lenses are then subjected to Sudan Black test (i.e., coating intactness test described above) to examine whether the coating is still intact. To survive digital rubbing test, there is no significantly increased staining spots (e.g., staining spots covering no more than about 5% of the total lens surface). Water contact angles are measured to determine the durability of a non-silicone hydrogel coating.

Example 2

For comparison, two formulations, MS05UV and MS02UV, are prepared to have compositions as shown in Table 1. MS02UV is composed primarily of N-vinylpyrrolidone (NVP) as hydrophilic vinylic monomer whereas MS05UV is primarily composed of DMA as hydrophilic monomer and free of NVP. Both formulations were cured in polypropylene molds under UV for about one hour and good quality lenses were obtained. They have very similar water content and mechanical properties. Both lenses were extracted with isopropyl alcohol (IPA) solution (30min 50%/50% IPA/water, 30min 100% IPA, 30min 50%/50% IPA/water, 3X10min water). Lenses were then treated 2X10min 0.5% wt% PAA (polyacrylic acid, Mw = 100k) water solution (no pH adjustment) followed by 3X5min phosphate-buffered saline (PBS) flush before package in 4mL of PBS in vials. The autoclave cycle is 121 °C for 30 minutes. Lenses were then check on WBUT on a 20 seconds scale. MS02UV has >20 seconds of WBUT and MS05UV has only about 2 seconds. The controls, WBUT of MS02UV

and MS05UV packaged in PBS without PAA treatment are about 2 seconds. Evidently, the wettability of MS02UV is coming from the PAA treatment and is primary due to the PAA attached on the surface of the lens. Therefore, it in advantage to use NVP containing formulations for surface coating as it will have better PAA primer hence better coating durability.

Table 1

Formulation ID	MS02UV	MS05UV
MCR-M07	25	25
SiGMA	20	20
NVP	47	0
DMA	2	49
MMA	5	5
TEGDMA	0.6	0.6
TEGDVE	0.1	0.1
D1173	0.8	0.8
Monomer Subtotal	100.5	100.5
Molds Type	DSM	DSM
Curing	Air UV 4mV RT	Air UV 4mV RT
Time (min)	60	60
Packaging solution	PBS	PBS
Demold/Delens	easy	easy
WBUT (sec)	>20	2
Modulus (MPa)	0.46±0.04	0.53±0.01
Elongation (%)	176±25	295±47
Water Content (%)	59±1.0	56±1.3

Example 3

For comparison, 6 formulations were prepared to have compositions as shown in Table 2. The total amount of hydrophilic vinylic monomers (NVP and DMA) was kept constant among all the six formulations, while varying the amount ratio of NVP to DMA. The formulations were cured in polypropylene molds under UV (5 mW) for about 45 minutes and good quality lenses were obtained. Each of resultant lenses after demolding were extracted with about 4 ml of isopropyl alcohol (IPA) for overnight and then twice with 4 ml of DI water each for about 5 minutes. Each of the extracted lenses was dipped in 4 ml of 0.5% wt% PAA (polyacrylic acid, Mw = 100k) in water (pH ~2.8) for about 60 minutes and followed by twice dipping in 4 ml of PBS each for about 5 minutes before being packaged in 4mL of PBS in a vial. The packages with a lens therein were autoclaved at 121 °C for 30 minutes. After autoclave, lenses were removed from vials and soaked in fresh 4mL of PBS for at least 1 minute before WBUT evaluation. Lenses were then check on WBUT on a 20 seconds scale. The results in Table show that when NVP is present in an amount of about 30% or higher in the formulation, a stable PAA coating on a silicone hydrogel contact lens is stable as characterized by having a WBUT of greater than 20 seconds after autoclave.

Table 2

Compositions	Formula ID					
	MS04UV	MS04UVa	MS04UVb	MS04UVc	MS04UVd	MS04UVe
MCR-M07	20	20	20	20	20	20
SiGMA	20	20	20	20	20	20
Betacon	5	5	5	5	5	5
NVP	47	40	30	20	10	0
DMA	2	9	19	29	39	49
MMA	5	5	5	5	5	5
TEGDMA	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6
TEGDVE	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
D1173	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4
Molds Type	DSM	DSM	DSM	DSM	DSM	DSM
Curing	Air UV 5mW RT	Air UV 5mW RT	Air UV 5mW RT	Air UV 5mW RT	Air UV 5mW RT	Air UV 5mW RT
Time (min)	45	45	45	45	45	45
Packaging solution	PBS	PBS	PBS	PBS	PBS	PBS
WBUT (sec)	>20	>20	>20	10	10	5

What is claimed is:

1. A method for producing coated silicone hydrogel contact lenses each having a crosslinked hydrophilic coating thereon, comprising the steps of:
 - (a) obtaining a silicone hydrogel contact lens from a polymerizable composition comprising at least one silicone-containing vinyl monomer or macromer and from about 30% to about 60% by weight of N-vinylpyrrolidone relative to the total amount of polymerizable components; and
 - (b) contacting the silicone hydrogel contact lens with an aqueous solution of a homo- or copolymer of acrylic acid or C₁-C₃ alkylacrylic acid to form a base coating on the silicone hydrogel contact lens, wherein the base coating exhibits a water-break-up-time (WBUT) of about 20 seconds or more after the silicone hydrogel contact lens has been autoclaved at 115°C to 125°C in a phosphate buffered saline having a pH from about 6.5 to about 7.5 for about 30 minutes.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein the polymerizable composition comprises from about 35% to about 56%, preferably from about 40% to about 52% by weight of N-vinylpyrrolidone relative to the total amount of polymerizable components.
3. The method of claim 1 or 2, wherein the homo- or copolymer of acrylic acid or C₁-C₃ alkylacrylic acid is polyacrylic acid, polymethacrylic acid, polyethylacrylic acid, polypropylacrylic acid, poly(acrylic acid-co-methacrylic acid), poly[(meth)acrylic acid-co-ethylacrylic acid], poly[(meth)acrylic acid-co-propylacrylic acid], poly[(meth)acrylic acid-co-acrylamide], poly[(meth)acrylic acid-co-vinylpyrrolidone], poly[ethylacrylic acid-co-acrylamide], poly[ethylacrylic acid-co-vinylpyrrolidone], poly[propylacrylic acid-co-acrylamide], poly[propylacrylic acid-co-vinylpyrrolidone], hydrolyzed poly[(meth)acrylic acid-co-vinylacetate], hydrolyzed poly[ethylacrylic acid-co-vinylacetate], hydrolyzed poly[propylacrylic acid-co-vinylacetate], or combinations thereof.
4. The method of any one of claims 1 to 3, wherein the weight average molecular weight M_w of a homo- or copolymer of acrylic acid or C₁-C₃ alkylacrylic acid for forming a base coating on silicone hydrogel contact lenses is at least about 10,000 Daltons, preferably at least about 50,000 Daltons, more preferably from about 100,000 Daltons to about 5,000,000 Daltons.
5. The method of any one of claims 1 to 4, wherein wherein the homo- or copolymer of acrylic acid or C₁-C₃ alkylacrylic acid is polyacrylic acid, polymethacrylic acid, polyethylacrylic acid, polypropylacrylic acid, poly(acrylic acid-co-methacrylic acid), poly[(meth)acrylic acid-co-ethylacrylic acid], poly[(meth)acrylic acid-co-propylacrylic acid], or combinations thereof.
6. The method of any one of claims 1 to 5, wherein the aqueous solution of the homo- or copolymer of acrylic acid or C₁-C₃ alkylacrylic acid has a pH of about 2.5 or higher,

- preferably from about 2.5 to about 5.5, more preferably from about 3.0 to about 5.
7. The method of any one of claims 1 to 6, further comprising a step of covalently attaching and crosslinking a water-soluble and thermally-crosslinkable hydrophilic polymeric material having azetidinium groups onto the base coating to form a non-silicone hydrogel coating on the silicone hydrogel contact lens.
 8. The method of claim 7, wherein the step of covalently attaching and crosslinking is carried out directly in a sealed lens package containing a packaging solution including the water-soluble, thermally crosslinkable hydrophilic polymeric material during sterilization by autoclave at a temperature from about 115°C to about 125°C for at least about 20 minutes.