



PRESS RELEASE

TO: Editor in Charge

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Early Detection and Treatment Vital in Saving Vision from Age-Related Eye Diseases

The American Academy of Ophthalmology Names February as Save Your Vision Month and Urges the Importance of Comprehensive Baseline Eye Exams

(Honolulu, Hawaii), February 15, 2010 – Each year, millions of Americans suffer from severe vision loss and blindness due to age-related eye diseases, sometimes needlessly. There are ways to prevent and correct some forms of age-related visual impairment and preserve healthy vision. To educate the public about the risks of age-related eye disease, the American Academy of Ophthalmology has designated February as Save Your Vision Month.

“Many age-related eye diseases, such as glaucoma and cataracts, can progress without any warning signs,” said Christopher Tortora, Medical Director at Hawaiian Eye Center in Wahiawa. “This is the reason why regular visits with an eye care professional are essential for anyone over the age of 40.”

Eye disease becomes more common with age. Since early changes in vision often occur around age 40, a thorough ophthalmologic baseline evaluation is recommended at that time. An examination can detect common vision abnormalities. It could also uncover many forms of systemic disease that can affect the eyes, such as diabetes and hypertension. In addition, based on initial screening results, an eye care professional is able to recommend the appropriate interval for future eye exams.

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A healthy lifestyle can also help maintain healthy vision. A nutritious diet rich in green vegetables (especially leafy green vegetables like spinach, kale, and collard greens) and fruits can help promote eye health. A good night's sleep is a good way to rest and relax the eyes. Also, regular exercise can stimulate good blood circulation and oxygen intake in the eyes.

Protecting eyes from the sun is important as well. UV blocking sunglasses prevent retinal damage and can delay the development of cataracts. Additionally, the use of sunglasses helps prevent both cancerous and non-cancerous growths on the eyes and eyelids. Make sure that lenses block 98% or more of UVA and UVB, or are rated as "400 blockers."

"Many age-related eye diseases can be successfully treated if diagnosed at an early stage," said Dr. Tortora. "Early detection is vital in preventing vision loss and even blindness."

With appropriate prevention and early diagnosis, it is often possible to save vision from potentially blinding age-related eye diseases. By following these simple suggestions and taking the initiative to make regular visits to an eye care professional, clear healthy vision can last a lifetime.

Dr. Tortora, a board certified ophthalmologist, is host of "The Hawaiian Eye Show," a weekly informational radio program about healthy vision. He and his colleagues at Hawaiian Eye Center are committed to educating the public about the importance of preventative eye care. To learn more about a variety of eye health issues, please call the Hawaiian Eye Center at 621-8488 where "*life has never looked better.*"

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