



PRESS RELEASE

TO: Editor in Charge

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Know What to Ask your Doctor About Cataracts During August's Cataract Awareness Month

Understanding Diagnosis and Treatment Essential to Eye Health

(Honolulu, Hawaii), August 10, 2007 –For almost every time mom used to say “an apple a day keeps the doctor away,” those same doctors have said “early detection is key to treatment and prevention.” In that vein, the American Academy of Ophthalmology has named August Cataract Awareness month. For those over age 60, an annual visit to your eye doctor to screen for cataracts and other eye disease is crucial in preventing vision loss. It's also important to remember, however, that the best treatment is received when both doctors and patients understand respective health histories, the disease diagnosis and possible treatments. Hawaii's seniors and others must be sure to participate by knowing what a cataract is, how it can be treated and what to ask their doctor.

Each year there are 400,000 new cataract cases in America. A cataract is simply a clouding of the eye's lens that, if left untreated, can cause blindness. When caught early, a qualified eye doctor can create a tiny opening in the eye, remove the clouded lens and replace it with a clear lens implant. With the latest technology, some patients opt for an enhanced procedure to reduce or eliminate the need for glasses. Modern medical science has reduced cataracts to an almost 100% treatable disease, as long as the patient seeks the proper care from a health professional.

“One thing we like to be sure of is that the patient completely understands a cataract diagnosis and the prescribed treatment,” said Dr. Christopher Tortora, Medical Director at the Hawaiian Eye Center. “A patient who asks questions or wants to know more about the cataract removal process helps us to know they understand how we are going to do to help them improve their vision and eliminate the cataract.

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When visiting the doctor, patients should sure to make sure they have a good understanding of all the information related to three major “abouts.” First, they need to know about the disease; know what caused it, what can be done to treat it and if there are any symptoms to look out for in the future. Next, patients can ask about the recommended treatment including any medications, diet changes, how long the regimen will last and more. Finally, inquire about tests that might have to be done and what the doctor will be looking for.

For some people, receiving a diagnosis, such as cataracts, includes more information than usual. To make sure that no essential details are missed some individuals like to take a friend or relative to the appointment or bring a tape recorder with them. Others like to request their doctor write down important facts or instructions. Doctors also often have printed material in the office available for patients to take home with them.

“At the Hawaiian Eye Center we have a number of brochures detailing exactly what a cataract is, symptoms associated with a cataract and possible treatments,” Tortora said. “We also have brochures for the premium lens implant which our patients can take home and look through before deciding what type of procedure is the right one for them.”

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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