



## PRESS RELEASE

TO: Editor in Charge

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DATE: August 1, 2011

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **SALTY VISION**

*High Sodium Diet Could Result in Cataracts*

(Honolulu, Hawaii), August 1, 2011 – Watch those chips and pretzels! Recent studies suggest that reducing sodium intake could help prevent cataracts. Researchers have found that diets high in sodium are associated with posterior subcapsular cataracts, a condition which often requires surgery to correct. In an effort to remind people of the preventative measures they can take, the American Academy of Ophthalmology recognizes August as Cataract Awareness Month.

Research shows that people who consumed 3,000mg or more per day were twice as likely to develop significant cataracts compared with those who consumed around 1,200mg daily. Early symptoms of posterior subcapsular cataracts include blurred vision and difficulty with bright lights, glare, and halos around lights.

“A posterior subcapsular cataract develops toward the back portion of the lens and usually progresses more quickly than other types” said Dr. Christopher Tortora, Medical Doctor at the Hawaiian Eye Center and expert in “small incision” cataract surgery. “The cataract shows up as a small white cloudy area just under the back capsule of the lens which blocks the light traveling to the retina. As cataracts worsen they can cause significant loss of vision if they are not treated.”

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A cataract is an eye disease in which the proteins in the eye's lens clump together and create a cloudy area in the normally clear lens. This blocks light entering the eye, resulting in cloudy or blurry vision. The condition has little effect on vision at first but over time, cataracts grow larger and, if untreated, can eventually cause blindness by blocking light completely. Subcapsular cataracts are fairly common and the removal procedure is painless and easy for the patient in the hands of skilled surgeon.

Although cataracts are not completely preventable, there is evidence that diet and lifestyle considerations can reduce the development of cataracts. Reducing sodium intake is important. Many find this difficult due to high sodium levels in manufactured foods. In addition, quitting smoking, wearing sunglasses, and eating a diet rich in fresh fruits and vegetables will likely reduce the risk of developing a cataract. In addition, don't forget to visit an eye doctor regularly to monitor any vision changes.

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 other health issues, please call Hawaiian Eye Center at 621-8448 where "*life has never looked better.*"

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