



## **PRESS RELEASE**

TO: Editor in Charge

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

#### **WHAT YOUR EYES SHOULD EXPECT WHILE YOU'RE EXPECTING!**

*Enjoy an Eye-Healthy Pregnancy*

(Honolulu, Hawaii), May 2, 2011 – Pregnancy is a beautiful gift in any woman's life. During pregnancy, your body undergoes many changes. Due to hormonal shifts, metabolism changes, fluid retention and altered blood circulation, you can experience effects on your eyes and your eyesight during pregnancy in addition to changes elsewhere in your body. Remember, your baby's eyes are also developing, so it is vital to maintain a healthy diet rich in foods that will aid in the developmental process. Keep in mind that many of the changes experienced in pregnancy are temporary and will return to normal shortly after giving birth.

Most women experience dry eye syndrome during pregnancy. This is caused by changes in hormone levels which affect tear and lipid production in the eye. Dry eye can be treated with over-the-counter lubricants that act as tears to hydrate the eye and sooth the irritation. Look for preparations described as "artificial tears." You might also notice minor changes in your vision with glasses or contacts. Fluid retention can cause changes in the lens and cornea of the eye, altering your prescription a little. This can also affect the fit of your contact lenses, making them less comfortable. Some women experience more nearsighted during pregnancy, but this is usually temporary. For any significant changes, you should consult an eye specialist.

There are a number of vitamins and nutrients that benefit the development of a baby's eyes, maintain healthy vision for mom, and will give overall health benefits as well. There is an old Adage that carrots are good for your eyes, but it's not as simple as that. Carrots do provide a great source of vitamin A, as well as vitamin B6, and fiber, which are all important for development of a baby's eyes. Naturally loaded with DHA (Docosahexaenoic Acid), eggs are a low-calorie, high protein little bundle. DHA is one type of omega-3 fatty acid, the "good fat" that is an important component of the retina, and essential in the formation of the eyes in the fetus.

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Recently, lutein, which has been referred to as the “eye vitamin,” has been included in a variety of commercially available prenatal vitamins. There has been much talk about lutein and its benefits for the eyes. Foods that are naturally rich in lutein include dark green, leafy vegetables like spinach and kale, as well as other highly colored food such as corn, yams, and egg yolks.

This is only a partial list of nutritional items and vitamins that are likely to help in the development of a baby’s eyes as well as the maintenance of mom’s eye health. There are a number of other foods with good nutritional value including whole grains of all kinds, seeds (especially omega-3 rich flax), nuts, winter squash, apricots and kiwis.

Overall, remember that the eye problems that you experience during a pregnancy are generally temporary. In most cases, they will clear up shortly after delivery. However, what you eat during your pregnancy can have a life-long effect. Nutrients in healthy foods aid in the development of your baby’s eyes as well as other vital organs, so plan to eat foods rich in healthy nutrients. Have a happy and healthy pregnancy!

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 SEE-2020 (733-2020) where “*life has never looked better.*”

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