



PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Photos Attached

CATARACT CASES ON THE RISE

One of the Most Common Eye Disorders is Serious but Treatable

(Honolulu, Hawaii), August 29, 2012 – Cataracts are one of the most common eye disorders that affect almost 25 million Americans 40 and older, according to estimates in this year’s update of the “Vision Problems in the U.S.” report released by Prevent Blindness America. In Hawaii, it is estimated that nearly 115,000 people suffer from the disease. The report, funded by the National Eye Institute and the American Health Assistance Foundation, shows an increase of over 16 percent in those with the disease between 2000 and 2010.

A cataract is when the normally clear lens of the eye starts to become cloudy, which blocks and distorts light that is necessary for the retina to process images. The disease occurs as a natural process of aging, but some risk factors are exposure to ultraviolet light, diet, smoking, diabetes, use of some steroid medications, and serious eye injuries. Cataracts usually progress slowly over time and, if left untreated, can lead to blindness.

The American Academy of Ophthalmology has designated August as Cataract Awareness Month to remind people at risk to get routine eye exams and to be aware of the symptoms. Signs of cataracts include blurred vision, sensitivity to light, fading or yellowing of colors, poor night vision, sensitivity to glare, and seeing a halo around bright lights.

“In most cases, cataracts are treatable,” shared Dr. Christopher Tortora, M.D., Hawaiian Eye Center.

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“Everyone at every age should take care of their eyes and get routine check-ups with their doctor, but it becomes even more vital as people start to get older. At age 40, people should get a baseline eye exam from an ophthalmologist to determine their overall eye health.”

Cataracts are treated using a short, painless surgical procedure. Cataract surgery is one of the most common operations done in the U.S. and has a very high success rate. There are various methods available to correct cataracts, but the general procedure involves removing the clouded lens of the eye and replacing it with a new lens implant. Surgery is typically outpatient with very little pain or discomfort reported. There are also options to correct vision and reduce the need for eyeglasses at the time of cataract removal.

“Like many diseases, preventative measures and early diagnosis make a world of difference,” said Dr. Christopher Tortora. “It’s important for everyone to speak with their doctor and be mindful of the signs. Cataracts are a serious issue, but it can be treated.”

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 or visit www.HawaiianEye.com, where “*life has never looked better.*”

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