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For more information:
Prevent Blindness
Sarah Hecker
(312) 363-6035
shecker@preventblindness.org

Prevent Blindness Designates June as Cataract Awareness Month to Help Educate Public on Leading Cause of Vision Loss and Blindness

- Group Advises Steps That Can be Taken Today to Help Protect the Eyes from Cataract -

CHICAGO (May 23, 2019) – [More than 25 million Americans are estimated to have cataract](#), a clouding of the eye's lens, which blocks or changes the passage of light into the eye. [Prevent Blindness](#), the nation's oldest eye health and safety non-profit organization, has declared June as Cataract Awareness Month to educate the public on risk factors, symptoms and treatment options.

Most cataracts are caused by changes related to aging. However, other factors may cause cataracts to form including eye infections, some medicines (such as steroids), and injuries. Prolonged exposure to UV, and various diseases, such as diabetes or metabolic disorders, may also contribute to cataracts forming.

Cataract symptoms may include:

- Blurred vision, double vision, ghost images, or the sense of a "film" over the eyes
- Poor night vision
- Lights seem too dim for reading or close-up work
- Eyeglass prescriptions change often
- A visible milky or yellowish spot can be seen in the pupil

A healthy lifestyle can decrease the risks of developing cataract. Quitting smoking, controlling blood sugar levels, and consistently wearing UV-protecting sunglasses when outdoors can help.

According to the [National Eye Institute](#), eating a diet rich in fruits and vegetables, particularly dark leafy greens such as spinach, kale, or collard greens is also important

for keeping the eyes healthy. Research has also shown there are eye health benefits from eating fish high in omega-3 fatty acids, such as salmon, tuna, and halibut.

“Cataract is highly treatable with early detection and access to quality eye care services,” said Jeff Todd, president and CEO of Prevent Blindness. “We encourage everyone to make healthy vision a priority today to preserve it for years to come.”

[EyeCare America](#) from the American Academy of Ophthalmology offers the “Seniors Program,” where qualified seniors ages 65 and older can obtain a free eye exam and up to one year of follow-up care for any condition diagnosed during the initial exam, for the physician services.

For free information on cataract, please call Prevent Blindness at (800) 331-2020 or visit the Prevent Blindness website at www.preventblindness.org/cataract. For a listing of vision care financial assistance programs in English or Spanish, visit <https://www.preventblindness.org/vision-care-financial-assistance-information>.

About Prevent Blindness

Founded in 1908, Prevent Blindness is the nation's leading volunteer eye health and safety organization dedicated to fighting blindness and saving sight. Focused on promoting a continuum of vision care, Prevent Blindness touches the lives of millions of people each year through public and professional education, advocacy, certified vision screening and training, community and patient service programs and research. These services are made possible through the generous support of the American public. Together with a network of affiliates, Prevent Blindness is committed to eliminating preventable blindness in America. For more information, or to make a contribution to the sight-saving fund, call 1-800-331-2020. Or, visit us on the Web at preventblindness.org or facebook.com/preventblindness.

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