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**Prevent Blindness Offers New Educational Resources on Uveitis and Keratitis for Rare Disease Day**

***-- Prevent Blindness provides free resources to the public, including fact sheets, an educational video and dedicated webpages to help save sight from Inflammatory Eye Disease, Conditions --***

**CHICAGO (Feb. 24, 2020)** – In observance of [Rare Disease Day](#) on Feb. 29, 2020, [Prevent Blindness](#), the nation’s oldest volunteer eye health organization, is offering educational resources on uveitis, an inflammatory eye disease. Uveitis is a general term describing a group of inflammatory diseases that produces swelling and destroys eye tissues in the uvea (the middle layer of the eye that contains most blood vessels), according to the [National Eye Institute](#). Uveitis is caused by an eye injury or surgery, an infection, autoimmune diseases or systemic inflammatory disorders that affect the whole body, or the cause can be unknown.

In addition, Prevent Blindness offers a new patient education resource dedicated to keratitis, an inflammation of the cornea. The cornea is the clear, protective outer layer of the eye.

Prevent Blindness offers dedicated web pages at [www.preventblindness.org/uveitis](http://www.preventblindness.org/uveitis) and [www.PreventBlindness.org/keratitis](http://www.PreventBlindness.org/keratitis), as well as a new educational video. Downloadable fact sheets are also available, including, “[Uveitis Causes](#),” “[Uveitis Facts](#),” “[Uveitis Patient Guide](#),” and “[Keratitis](#).” Development of these new resources was supported by a grant from [Mallinckrodt Pharmaceuticals](#).

Without early detection and treatment, inflammatory eye diseases can lead to permanent vision loss. The prevalence of inflammatory eye diseases can vary based on the type and cause of the condition. Uveitis causes about [30,000 new cases of legal blindness](#) annually in the United States and accounts for about 10–15 percent of all cases of total blindness in the country.

Uveitis symptoms may occur quickly in an acute form (lasts less than six weeks) or slowly in a chronic form (lasts longer than six weeks). Symptoms may affect one or both eyes.

- Eye redness
- Eye pain
- Light sensitivity
- Blurred vision
- Dark, floating spots in your field of vision (floaters)

- Decreased vision

Uveitis can affect anyone at any age, but it is most commonly seen in working age adults, and has a higher prevalence in women. In addition, smoking may increase the risk of getting uveitis.

General eye inflammation occurs in response to infection, allergies, autoimmune disorders, irritation, injury, or trauma to the eyes, eyelids, or surrounding tissues. Most cases of eye inflammation can be successfully treated. However, in some cases there can be an eye disease present, which can pose a threat to eyesight.

According to a report from the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#), an estimated 930,000 doctor's office and outpatient clinic visits and 58,000 emergency department visits for keratitis or contact lens disorders occur annually. And, episodes of keratitis and contact lens disorders cost an estimated \$175 million in direct health care expenditures.

[Wearing contact lenses](#), especially sleeping in the lenses, increases the risk of both infectious and noninfectious keratitis. The risk increases from wearing them longer than prescribed, improper cleaning and disinfection, and wearing contact lenses while exposed to water (such as in swimming pools or hot tubs).

“Inflammatory eye diseases are very serious and can lead to significant vision loss and even blindness,” said Jeff Todd, president and CEO of Prevent Blindness. “It is very important to have regular, comprehensive eye exams, to help catch vision issues early on. We encourage everyone to make an appointment with an eye doctor immediately if you experience any sudden vision changes to help save your sight in the future.”

For more information on uveitis, please call Prevent Blindness at (800) 331-2020 or visit <https://www.preventblindness.org/uveitis>. For more information on keratitis, visit <https://www.preventblindness.org/keratitis>. 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](http://preventblindness.org) or [facebook.com/preventblindness](https://facebook.com/preventblindness).

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