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## **Three in four can avoid blindness with a regular eye exam: Bringing awareness this World Sight Day (October 8, 2020)**

**Toronto, Ontario** – Fighting Blindness Canada urges all Canadians to schedule their regular eye exams to avoid blindness on this World Sight Day taking place Thursday, October 8, 2020.

Today, 1 in 7 people in Canada will develop a serious eye disease in their lifetime. Every 12 minutes, someone in Canada begins to lose their eyesight. Furthermore, the prevalence of vision loss in Canada is expected to increase nearly 30% in the next decade.

The good news, thanks to research discoveries becoming today's treatments, 3 in 4 cases of vision loss are preventable –if diagnosed early.

“After the age of 40, the number of people with vision loss doubles each decade. After 75, it triples,” explains Doug Earle, President and CEO of Fighting Blindness Canada. “That's why it's so important for Canadians to be proactive about getting regular eye exams.”

A 2018 survey, commissioned by the Canadian Ophthalmological Society (COS), revealed the majority of Canadians (59 per cent) experience symptoms of potential eye disease, yet only half (54 per cent) reported they had seen a health care professional about these symptoms. This is particularly concerning as early detection is key in preventing eye disease from progressing or resulting in vision loss or blindness.

Top causes of vision loss in Canada include age-related macular degeneration (AMD), glaucoma, diabetic retinopathy and cataracts. Their occurrence increases with age. More Canadians have AMD than breast cancer, prostate cancer, Alzheimer's disease, and Parkinson's disease combined. Vision loss is the most feared disability by almost 80% of Canadians.

At a high level, 7 million Canadians are living with blinding eye diseases. This total is made up of 1.5 million Canadians living with a seeing disability affecting their daily life, and over 5.59 million Canadians living with an eye disease(s) putting them at risk of blindness.

World Sight Day is an international day of awareness, held annually on the second Thursday of October to focus attention on the global issue of eye health. This year, World Sight Day falls on October 8, 2020.

“This year's World Sight Day is an important reminder to remain focused on your vision health. Even during uncertain COVID times, vision cannot be neglected.” Earle adds, “Eye specialists are working hard to reduce the risk of COVID-19 when you seek vision care. Let's make sure we all see each other on the other side of COVID-19.”



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**About Fighting Blindness Canada:**

[Fighting Blindness Canada \(FBC\)](#) is the largest charitable funder of vision research in Canada. With research at the heart of its focus, FBC has contributed over \$40 million towards sight-saving treatments and cures for blinding eye diseases. With the support of its generous donors, FBC has funded over 200 research grants that explore the biology of vision, as well as essential pre-clinical and clinical vision research designed to connect patients to emerging treatments.

To learn more, visit [fightingblindness.ca](http://fightingblindness.ca) or call 1-800-461-3331. For vision health and COVID-19 eye health inquiries, contact FBC's Health Information Line at 1-888-626-2995 or [healthinfo@fightingblindness.ca](mailto:healthinfo@fightingblindness.ca).

**FBC Media Contacts:**

Jackie Rosen, Executive Assistant  
416.360.4200 Ext. 246  
[jrosen@fightingblindness.ca](mailto:jrosen@fightingblindness.ca)

Fay Knights, Communications Manager  
416.360.4200 Ext. 255  
[fknight@fightingblindness.ca](mailto:fknight@fightingblindness.ca)